





Division

Section

POLITICS AND RELIGION
IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

*That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ;
and afterward that which is spiritual.—S. PAUL.*

POLITICS & RELIGION IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

THE REV. J. C. TODD

M.A. CANTAB., B.Sc. GLASGOW.

CANON OF S. SAVIOUR'S CATHEDRAL, NATAL.

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TO MY
MOTHER

FROM WHOSE LIPS I FIRST HEARD
THE STORY OF ISRAEL

PREFACE

“THE Bible was never more studied or less read than at the present day.” This paradox is true at least of the Old Testament. For two generations scores of patient scholars have toiled at the text, scanning each letter with microscopic care, and one result of their labours has been that, to the majority of educated men and women, of whatever belief or no belief, the “open Bible” has become a closed, nay, a sealed book. It is not what it used to be ; what it has become they do not know, and in scorn or sorrow or apathy they have laid it aside.

This is deplorable. No one can with a light heart see such a violent break in the continuity of our religious and, indeed, our intellectual life. The basis on which twenty centuries of Christian culture largely rest is not lightly to be rejected. Even were the place of the Bible being taken by some valuable work on religion and ethics we should hesitate long ;

but there is no such substitute. There is nothing to fill the gap.

It must be the aim of those of us who frankly accept the results of Biblical Criticism to endeavour to bring back the attention of intelligent men and women to the Scriptures as a source of spiritual instruction. We can only do this by clear statements, based on assured results of criticism.

Several eminent divines and scholars have approached the task in England, but they have, to a certain extent, devoted themselves to minimising the difficulties caused by the dates now assigned to the books of Scripture. It is no doubt very useful for those whose religious ideas are closely bound up with the recorded spiritual experiences of (say) Moses and David, to be assured that there is nothing to prevent us from believing, if we want to do so, that Moses issued laws not wholly dissimilar from the existing codes, or that David wrote psalms whose spirit resembled that of the existing collection. Such teaching may prove most helpful to distressed minds. But it has its drawbacks.

In the first place it tends to introduce an element of unreality and uncertainty into the *whole* story, and intellects more robust or less devout are tempted to relegate the Bible generally to the land of pious

“may-be’s.” Further, it provides no adequate basis for teaching the next generation. *They* have as yet no spiritual demand for a possible rehabilitation of doubtful history. Here is the Hebrew Bible before us as a fact; are we unable to give any adequate account of its real, positive value to those who come to it with young, open minds and no dogmatic prepossessions? The history of Rome, the history of Greece, is not a collection of *possibilities* century after century: we tell our scholars where historic certitude begins; why should we continue to wrap up Judah in a mixture of fact and fable?

It is sometimes said, Let us confine ourselves to the spiritual and moral lessons of the Bible, and let us leave on one side the historical aspect. But to do so—even if it were possible—would be to ignore the unique value of Holy Scripture. It is not a formal treatise on religion and ethics; it is the record of the lives and thoughts of men. It is just because the lessons are given in this concrete form that they are superlatively valuable; this is the reason why not only have they never been supplanted, but why they never can be supplanted in the future.

The problem before us at the present day is to restate the history in the light of modern research.

We must not attempt to trace the "evolution of dogma" as if it were a separate entity. The beliefs of a nation are one aspect of a complex whole. It is, indeed, a platitude to say that in the Ancient World politics and religion are two sides of the same thing, but this platitude must be applied as rigorously in Israel as elsewhere. The developed Religion of Israel is one of the foundations of the modern world; it is the gift which the Western Semites have bestowed on all succeeding generations. But to understand it we must see it in the making, as one aspect of a developing unity—the nation as a whole.

Only by the study of the Old Testament can an educated man hope to understand the religion which he believes (or refuses to believe) at the present day. As the student prepares himself for the study of modern Metaphysic by reading Plato; or for the study of modern Law by reading Justinian; so the only way in which he can prepare himself for modern Theology is by going to the fountain-head and seeing how it first developed under the simpler conditions of Antiquity. And just as Plato and Justinian are sealed books to him who has no knowledge of Greek and Roman History, so Isaiah and Ezekiel yield their secrets to those only who

understand the social and political movements of the time.

In the following pages I have assumed the main results of criticism. The great reconstruction of the literary history of the Bible is the work of a large number of scholars on the Continent and in England. It owes something to so many writers, and is so generally accepted, that I have not given references to the sources from which the various parts have come. The history of criticism is the fit subject for a book devoted to that alone. Occasionally the scholar will notice that in details I have advanced views which have not hitherto been suggested. I have for the most part avoided discussing disputed points, confining myself to the statement of what appeared to be the likeliest version of events. I have done this advisedly, as my aim is to suggest a clear picture of the whole.

The principal object of the book is to try and recover as far as possible the connection in ancient Israel between Politics and Religion. I have not written a History of Israel or a History of the Religion of Israel. What I offer to the reader is a preliminary sketch, showing the main lines on which he ought to go in studying the Bible for himself,

with all the aids which Commentaries and Histories can afford him.

The consideration of the Old Testament as a *Praeparatio Evangelica* lies outside the scope of the present work.

It may be well to explain here the use of certain terms. *Ancient* applies to the whole period before the Christian Era. As regards the Mediterranean basin (excluding Egypt), this contains three well-marked periods, which I have denoted by the words *primitive*, *early*, and *late*. Primitive times are those before the dawn of history, and can be known to us only by conclusions drawn from later facts. Thus if we say that sacrifice is a primitive institution, we mean that although it survived into the historic period its origin is antecedent to it. The distinction between *early* and *late* is perhaps more subtle, but it is of equal importance. At a certain epoch in their development the Mediterranean States became self-conscious; the citizens reasoned about their institutions, and formed theories. In the history of Israel the time of Isaiah may be taken as the turning-point.

The name "Israel" belongs, strictly speaking, to the Northern tribes only. But Jerusalem was always in great measure a Benjamite (and therefore a

Northern) town. After the destruction of Samaria the South became permeated with Northern ideas and traditions, and we may therefore quite fairly regard the evolution as one.

In the spelling of proper names I have, after careful consideration, adopted the familiar forms of the English Bible (with the one exception of the divine name Yahweh). There is much to be said for and against the use of a more accurate spelling. The "depolarisation" is a distinct gain; it is, for example, more easy to attempt to arrive at a critical estimate of Samuel if we call him by the unfamiliar name Shmu'el. But, on the other hand, the names in their more accurate form often appear outlandish, if not grotesque, to the English reader, as Yirmyahu for Jeremiah. Moreover, in a popular sketch like the present it would be irritating to the non-Hebraist to have constantly to "translate" every name into its accustomed equivalent.

With regard to Yahweh there can be no compromise if the man of ordinary education is ever to have a clear idea of religious development. The LORD of the English version is impossible, because it obscures the vital fact that the word, as used in the Bible, is a proper noun. And *Jehovah* is not only wrong in itself, but it introduces a whole train of

thought—God as the Moral Governor of the Universe—which is entirely foreign to the earliest form of Israelite religion.

It has been necessary to introduce a few Hebrew words into the text, as *berith*, *kodesh*, *torah*. My plan has been to make them look as like English words as possible, again at the expense of a more scientific and accurate system.

The time has perhaps scarcely arrived when one can do absolute justice in the great case of Assyria *versus* Israel, settling the rival claims of “Babel und Bibel,” in Friedrich Delitzch’s catchy phrase. The Assyriologists naturally magnify their office; and Hebrew students, as naturally, tend to ignore the vast change which recent discoveries have made.

The matter at issue may best be explained by an imaginary case. Suppose that at some remote date in the future, say 5000 A.D. (when the United Kingdom has long since vanished), by one of the accidents of history the literature of England has been lost while the literature of Scotland survives. The Scottish literature, we will suppose, has been translated, edited, annotated, and criticised for centuries, while England and all its works are known only by allusions in Scottish writers. Suddenly the literature of England is unearthed by excavating.

Immediately the learned world is rent in two. The New School exclaim that Scotland's true position is now known, and that its only value was as a dependency of England. The Old School assert that Scotland's importance was its own, and that the discovery of ten adjacent Englands would not affect the matter.

The mental effect is certainly somewhat startling. We feel like men who have spent the night in an inn, believing themselves to be in the heart of the country, and when the day dawns find themselves in the suburbs of a great city.

Probably, as usual, the truth lies somewhere between the extreme positions, but, *on the main issue*, as will be seen from the following pages, my own vote is frankly cast for Mumpsimus. Jerusalem is still Jerusalem ; and Nineveh, Nineveh. The unique work which Israel has done in the world it has done *as Israel*, and not as a fringe of Assyria ; humanity worships the God of Israel, not the uncivilised local variant of Shamash or Asshur or Marduk.

To the friends who have kindly read the book before publication I take this opportunity of offering my thanks. They will see that in many instances their suggestions have been adopted.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE Old Testament is the epos of the Fall of Jerusalem. From the first verse of Genesis to the last of Malachi there rings through it the note of the Capture, the Sack, and the Destruction of the City by the Babylonian Army in 586 B.C. That terrible event is the key to the book. The circumstances which led up to it, the disaster itself, and the consequences which followed, form the subject of the whole.

Hence it is the saddest book ever written. Fear and anguish and woe resound from page to page.

Of course, as has often been pointed out, it is not strictly a book but a library, written in many parts and many fashions. Yet it is a selected library. Out of the whole ancient literature of Israel, as with other nations, a fraction only has survived, but the choice of that fraction has not been left to chance. How far the selection was made consciously and of set purpose we cannot now determine. It may well

be that it was largely a natural selection, made unconsciously by the community in general setting the stamp of approval on this work and on that. But, however it has been effected, the result is that through this comparatively large mass of ancient literature runs the unity of a single subject and a single motive; and however heterogeneous be the elements of which it is composed, it forms one whole—the epos of the Siege of Jerusalem.

Heterogeneous enough. Eloquent preachers and inspired poets, masters of historic prose and deep thinkers, dull annalists and painful genealogists, priestly authorities on ritual and clerks in the public service, collectors of folklore and pious redactors of ancient tradition, all these and more have contributed to its pages. By devious paths the long narrative pursues its way, diverging into episodes and interludes, into laws and catalogues; but through it all runs the thought of that supreme day when fire came upon Judah, and devoured the palaces of Jerusalem. Much of it was no doubt already in writing before that climax, but practically every section owes its place in the present collection to its bearing on the central fact.

A comparison inevitably suggests itself with the story of the Siege of Troy, in Homer and the Greek Dramatists; but the comparison is made only to be dispelled the next moment. There is really no resemblance except the bare fact that the capture of

a city forms the centre of each series. The Siege of Troy took place in a remote and legendary past ; Agamemnon, Iphigeneia, and Andromache are only suggestions or themes for poetic imagination. The Capture of Jerusalem is as historical as the Capture of Paris by the Prussians, and the story is written largely by men who describe the catastrophe which overtook their own homes and temple.

In the Old Testament we find recorded also the Fall of Samaria, which took place more than a century earlier than that of Jerusalem, and it might seem more accurate to describe the book as the epos of the double tragedy. Samaria was, at the time of its fall, a more important city than Jerusalem, greater probably in population, certainly in art, in literature, in world-fame. Much, nay most, of the earlier narrative leads us to Samaria rather than to Jerusalem.

Yet the Fall of Samaria was only in truth an episode in the history of Jerusalem. Had Samaria stood alone its memory would have perished with it when it fell ; barely the name would have survived to our times. But Jerusalem caught up the tradition of Samaria and preserved it. Whatever has survived of Samaria lives because it became an element in the life of Jerusalem ; whatever Jerusalem failed to incorporate in itself has passed away beyond recall. There was a tenderness and beauty in the religious feeling of the North which we miss in the sterner

South, but it has only survived for us because it has been included in the literature of the neighbour kingdom.

Nor was the disaster confined to these two cities. It included the whole Western Semitic area. Damascus, Tyre, and the cities of Philistia all fell before the brutal soldiery of Nineveh and Babylon. For two centuries the cloud from the North hung lowering on the horizon before it finally burst over Jerusalem.

To all these nations save one it was practically the full end. Neither Assyrian nor Babylonian kings were able to consolidate a world-empire. As conquerors they brought neither culture like the Macedonians, nor law like the Romans; "red ruin and the breaking up of laws" were their gifts to the world around. The Western Semites from the Euphrates to Egypt fell never again to rise.

Judah alone preserved her life, though in an altered form. Syria, Phœnicia, Israel, Philistia have disappeared as living factors in the world's history. Judah lives; and the Old Testament is the record of what was practically her death and resurrection, and from it we learn how it came to pass that in that deluge of destruction she escaped the annihilation which overtook her neighbours.

As might be expected, no small portion of the book is unintelligible to us, or nearly so, not only through change of standpoints, but through the actual destruction, both accidental and wilful, of the

ancient text. Yet we may rather be surprised and thankful that so much remains, and that such a literally priceless book is in our hands to-day.

It is the work of Criticism to examine, to sift, to weigh the different parts of the work, and from the result to recover the true history of the nation. The Old Testament is not a scientific history but a collection of sources. In the narratives of early events we have simply the accounts given of them by men who lived centuries later. As with other countries, the restored history supplied by criticism differs somewhat widely from the existing writings, and criticism must justify itself by indicating clearly how the story came to take its present shape. That is the proof which readers have a right to demand, viz. that the revised story shall itself explain how the unrevised story came into existence. In the case of Israel this can be done with greater clearness than with other nations. In the main outline we can see how the development of the nation produced a theory of the nation which in turn half consciously and half unconsciously involved a reconstruction of history.

Side by side with criticism must go human sympathy, if history is to be anything but a valley of dry bones. The most glorious pages of Greek or Hebrew literature become mere pegs on which pedants hang discussions of chronological and linguistic niceties unless we resolutely try to come

face to face with live human beings, men of like passions and impulses with ourselves. In his *Ancient Greek Literature* Professor Gilbert Murray has shown us with what astonishing success this may be done in the case of the Greeks. Perhaps with the ancient Israelites the problem is harder. There are plenty of unreal Israelites about as there are the unreal Greeks to whom Professor Murray alludes. We may be allowed to paraphrase his words and apply them to Israel. First there is the unaccountable Israelite of the Sunday Schools, who spent his time in incurring the wrath of the Almighty by worshipping "other gods," well knowing that they were simply wood and stone. Equally hollow is the Israelite from Germany, who lived to display his capacity for religion in antithesis to the Greek with his capacity for art. The Israelite of our own Broadchurchmen found his main occupation in life in choosing between the fearless, truth-loving Prophet and the crafty, degraded Priest, and generally ended by preferring the latter. Lastly, we have the "foster-brother of Kaffirs and hairy Ainos."

The principal fault of all these ghosts except the last, is that they lack the two main preoccupations of man, wherever we find him—first, to earn his dinner, and second, to eat it. The artistic man prefers to eat off a beautiful plate, the religious man says grace before meat; but the moment you try to conceive of a man who simply contemplates the

dishes, or praises God without eating, you have left humanity altogether, and are calling up abstract ideas of art and religion—with disastrous results when you try to re-enact history with these lifeless simulacra.

Religion is a spirit in which we live our daily life, but that life must be lived whether we are religious or not. No more in ancient Israel than elsewhere can we suppose that propositions in divinity *took the place* of bread-and-butter.

The seductive method of Romance offers us an easy way to a living picture of ancient times. As Browning says, you

“Simply here and there
(The while you vault it through the loose and large)
Hang to a hint.”

Unfortunately, the result is as useless as it is facile ; and still more unfortunately, it injures much good and scholarly writing on Old Testament subjects. It is not perhaps quite easy to draw the line between Romance and the legitimate and necessary reading between the lines, but the writer ought to ask himself at every sentence, Can I, if called on, put my finger on the passage or word of some ancient writer which suggested this ?

While we find *ourselves* in past ages we must not expect to find either the comforts of our civilisation or the refinements of our religion and morals ; nor

must we judge the past by the lack of them. To do so is to set up a wholly fictitious standard, leading us to the still popular idea that the majority of men in the past ages were desperately wicked and desperately wretched. At the present day we know the world as it has never been known before. We are familiar with races in every stage of civilisation, and the verdict must be that man in ordinary circumstances is not a bad fellow on the whole, and that he rubs through life fairly happily. There is no reason to doubt that this has been true in the past. The Hebrew historians, writing by the light of the conflagration of Jerusalem, may be excused for regarding the world of their day as both wicked and wretched, but we need not generalise their view.

Above all we must get rid of the parrot-cry of "steady moral degeneration." Every century since the dawn of history has found some historian to discover in it moral degeneration and spiritual decay. "The old faiths, the old virtues, were dying out, and nothing took their place but private selfishness." So it stands written of literally every epoch. All Greek history from Marathon to Chaeroneia, all Roman history from Tarquin to Augustus, exhibits steady moral degeneration. Nor does the process cease with Christianity. The days of the Empire, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, all when we come to them show moral decay, and old virtues

dying out, replaced by private selfishness. It has become a perfect obsession with historians. If it be a true picture we must be in a bad state to-day after an unbroken moral decay of more than three thousand years.

Probably the whole conception rests on a misapprehension, even a mental trick, by which the eccentricities of the *individuals* we are studying appear in contrast to the collective morality (*mores*) of the preceding time. When to this we add the fact that the basis of morality is undergoing an age-long alteration, we may in part explain the illusion by which each epoch, as we come to it, appears to be a period of increasing depravity.

CHAPTER II

THE LAMENTATIONS

AS a suitable starting-point we may take the book which furnishes the clue to the whole—*Lamentations*. This exquisite work consists of five poems of twenty-two stanzas each. An old tradition ascribes the authorship—probably wrongly—to the prophet Jeremiah, whose authentic writings will be considered later ; but in any case we may assign the poems with a high degree of probability to the sixth century B.C.

The first four were designed for public recitation, and are written in the metre reserved for the *kînah* or dirge, wailed by professional rhapsodists at a funeral. The person they lament, however, is not king or general, but the “Daughter of Zion,” the personified City of Jerusalem. The whole book is a lamentation for the destruction of the city by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

We are certainly not in the presence of a quite recent anguish, yet on the other hand the (author or) authors can hardly be conceived as describing a

scene of which they had not been eye-witnesses. The passion expressed, combined with the care in execution, suggests a wound not new, indeed, and yet unhealed, producing somewhat the same effect on our minds as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, though in a higher flight of literature.

The subject is the destruction of the *City*. This point must be emphasised as it is of importance. The captivity of the nation, the burning of the Temple, the imprisonment of the king, are all mentioned, but they are all simply parts and aspects of the real tragedy, the downfall of Jerusalem.

From the book itself, short though it be, we can reconstruct the city with singular vividness.

It stood on a hill or rising-ground, and was surrounded by a wall with gates. Beyond this lay an outer fortification. The gates could be strongly barred, and the whole was generally regarded as impregnable. The city was laid out in streets and adorned with palaces. The culminating point was the great sanctuary with its altar.

This sanctuary was the House of Yahweh, the tutelary Deity of the city, whose name is more familiar to us in the corrupt form Jehovah. He was also invoked as Adonai, or Lord. His sanctuary was the focus of the city's life, and no alien was allowed to enter the sacred court.

The city was densely peopled, and formed a well-ordered community. At the head of all was the

Melek, the King, who derived his power from the god of the city, and bore the title "the Anointed of Yahweh." Under him we have four official classes, the Nobles, the Elders, the Prophets, and the Priests. Something of the functions of all these classes is shown us. The *King* was the "breath of our nostrils," nominally the sole executive, but in the exercise of the regal power he had associated with him the *Nobles* (called Princes in the English Bible), who shared the responsibility of his policy. The *Elders* held their meeting at the principal gate of the city, and there made speeches; no doubt this was a Court of Justice. The *Priests*, in addition to their service at the altar, had to give *torah* or instruction; to the *Prophets*, who also frequented the sanctuary of Yahweh, the State looked for visions or "burdens" to warn the city of impending disaster. Throughout the whole runs the thought that the City herself is more than any or all of these; they are *her* king, *her* princes, *her* prophets.

The great classes of ordinary folk come often into notice: the young men, the mothers with their children, the virgins. These last are alluded to so frequently as to suggest that they had a distinct position and importance in the State.

It was a happy city, a place of dancing and music. On the great religious feasts the country people crowded in, and the sanctuary rung with the shouts of the rejoicing worshippers.

All this is gathered up into one idea. The strong and beautiful city, the divine and human inhabitants, the well-ordered government, the joy of life, all these form—ZION. The city was, in a word, the citizen's own greater self; hence he exhausts language in its praise, calling Jerusalem the Beauty of Israel, the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of the whole Earth. He personifies the complete idea in his fine Oriental phrase, the Daughter of Zion.

The details of the siege need not detain us, they are the usual horrors of an ancient "fight to a finish." First, the anguish of starvation, old men dropping down dead, mothers devouring their children. Then the enemy break in, the nobles are tortured, the women violated, the people enslaved, and the fire devours palaces and temple.

The passionate love for Zion becomes a passionate sorrow, even a passionate pity, as the personal woe is lost in the anguish of the Daughter of Zion.

"She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks."

"Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her."

"What shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O Virgin
Daughter of Zion,
For thy wound is great as the sea, who can heal thee?"

On two salient points the reader's attention is at once concentrated, as they are in striking contrast to the usual thought of antiquity. First, *who* is it that

has brought all this terrible destruction on the city? It is none other than Yahweh himself, the Divine Protector. This was an amazing paradox in the ancient world; as if a man should burn down his own house and destroy all his family and his possessions. And then, *why* has he done it? Not for any neglect of his altar or violation of his ritual, but for the personal sins of his people. Because all have sinned, and those who should know best, the prophet and the priest, have sinned the most.

We can imagine some astounded alien as asking, "But what will become of the god himself after all is done? Can a god exist without worshippers, without a shrine, without sacrifice?"

The answer is the expression of a lofty and pathetic faith:—

"Thou, O Yahweh, holdest thy seat for ever;
Thy Throne is from generation to generation."

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT CIVILISATION

LET us glance at the contemporary state of the civilised world. Babylon, of course, was in the hey-day of her brief empire. Assyria had fallen for ever in 606 B.C., and Persia had not yet set out on her great career of conquest. The age-long might of Egypt was at length in the eyes of all men visibly on the wane. In the Greek World the monarchies had given place to the aristocracies, which were themselves disappearing in tyrannies. Solon was legislating at Athens, Alcaeus and Sappho singing in Lesbos, Thales calculating eclipses at Miletus. We are still a century from Marathon. In Rome the monarchy is ageing, and though it will last out another seventy years or so, the grave constitutional movements, of which the expulsion of the kings was the result, are already at work.

Ancient civilisation has two distinct stages or phases : that of the empires in the great river valleys, and that of the city-states on the shores of the

Mediterranean. The latter was subsequent in its appearance to the former, and no doubt owed something in almost all departments of human activity to the work already accomplished. None the less it was a new departure: not a development of what had preceded it, but a new shoot from the great root of humanity.

We must honour very highly the men who lived in the basins of the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates, and the Hwangho, for we find them in an advanced state of civilisation, while the rest of the world was sunk in barbarism. There is something almost oppressive in the solidity of their institutions, which grow, culminate, and decline not in centuries but in millenniums. No one can assert with any confidence that China is at the present day approaching the throes of dissolution; and yet China was one of the great empires of the Ancient World. Calculations based on modern Western reasonings and figures become valueless.

The civilisation of the Mediterranean City-states was like the blossoming of summer flowers compared with the fossilised duration of the River-empires. Their whole history would hardly serve to fill some of the *lacunae* in the story of Egypt as we know it at the present time. Yet there was in it something brighter and nobler than in the history of the Empires, and when they passed away they left a rich heritage first to the Roman world and then to modern Europe.

The men of the Cities were not perhaps greater men by natural endowment than the men of the Empires, but their circumstances called out their individuality, first in politics, and then in every department of human life. A homely figure may illustrate the difference. If a hundred men are pulling a heavy load, the effort of the individual is apparently lost. If he pulls harder, or if he simply pretends to pull, it makes no apparent difference. Moreover, the efforts of all must be directed by some outside person. On the other hand, if four men are pushing a hand-cart the work of each tells, and they can control their own movements by mutual agreement. In the Empires, although of course the result was entirely due to human energy just as in the Cities, yet the movement was largely a blind one outside of individual control. In the Cities, on the contrary, the state was truly the citizen's greater self, for it was the means by which he realised whatever was in him, and effected far greater results than would otherwise have been possible. In a word, the men of the Empires were all practically slaves, from the head of the state downwards ; slaves not indeed to foreign rule, but none the less slaves to their own law not understood, and their destiny not under conscious control. The men of the Cities were all free : indeed, we might go so far as to say that an educated slave at Athens who understood and appreciated the city's life and destiny, was more

truly a free man than an Assyrian or Egyptian noble.

“The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome,” are largely due to the fact that their inhabitants were conscious arbiters of their own destinies. It was from the “dear city of Cecrops” that the Greek advanced to the “dear city of God”—from his well-ordered parish to the world. The perennial interest of Greek literature lies in the fact that it was written by men making for the first time a frontal attack on the Universe.

It is a natural but most serious error to class Jerusalem with the Empires and not with the Cities. Egypt, Palestine, and Assyria are associated in our minds, while Greece and Rome fall into a different mental pigeon-hole. We conceive of Israel as being politically a feeble copy of its mighty neighbours on the Nile and the Tigris.

This mental association is, however, very largely arbitrary. The Israelite lived on the high-road between the two Empires, and therefore the three figure frequently together in the story, but this in itself establishes no more connection than the “connection” between Greece and Persia at Marathon and Salamis. The *influence* of Assyria on Israel will be discussed later.

It may be said, however, that Greeks and Romans were Aryans, while the others were Semites; and that the City-state was the peculiar development of the

Greco-Roman race. The ethnological affinities of Egypt, however, are by no means clearly established, and the gulf between Eastern and Western Semites was admittedly a wide one. Moreover, the great "Greco-Roman race" threatens to go to pieces on our hands. The language test is now regarded as much less important than was supposed thirty years ago, and once that great bond is loosened the edifice begins to crumble, for the differences between Greek and Roman have always been more striking than the resemblances. The Roman begins to develop Keltic affinities, and the Greek tends to drift to a position at least midway between "European" and "Asiatic." If the bonds which connect him with the West are strong, yet his capacity for emotional religion, and his subtlety, degenerating into duplicity, link him with the East. His seclusion of women and his characteristic vice are Oriental. It is no accident that in later times has divided the Church into Roman and Greek, nor is it simply the admitted division of the "leading race" determining the religion for the rest of mankind; it is the whole West opposed to the whole East.

Enough has been said to show that the political position of Israel cannot be determined *a priori*, but must be deduced from the available evidence. In the last chapter the city of Jerusalem was reconstructed from the poems relating to its destruction. The evidence showed clearly enough that religion,

nationality, and loyalty, though all present, were subordinated to *civism*, to the glory and pride of citizenship. The whole description might very well stand for that of a Greek city in the days of monarchy; while the passionate love for the city-state cannot be exceeded. "The perfection of beauty; the joy of the whole earth"—what more could Pericles have said of Athens? One of our objects in view in tracing the history of Israel will be to show that it is the record of a city-state in the making.

The consequences of this are of the utmost importance. The trite saying that Europe evolved its own Law and its own Philosophy and Art, but borrowed its Religion from Asia, is seen to be misleading. Law, Philosophy, Art, and Religion all come from the free citizens of the city-states of the Mediterranean. They are products of the same training, developments of the same spirit. The lines of that development are in marvellous accordance with the destiny of the three greatest cities. Unless Rome had conquered the world she could not have developed the *jus gentium*; unless Athens had continued self-centred, her philosophy and art would have failed to reach their full stature; it will be seen later that *unless Jerusalem had been destroyed*, her religion would have remained embryonic.

Once this analogy is recognised, great light is thrown on History. The common belief is, of course,

that "Old Testament history" is long anterior to "Classical history." The *literature* is certainly earlier, but the development was nearly synchronous. In some points, indeed, Greece was the leader, for kings were still reigning in Jerusalem (as they were in Rome) in the year 586, when the downfall took place; while in most Hellenic cities (Sparta is a notable exception) the monarchy had been abolished. We gather, however, from the pages of Jeremiah that the House of David was already an archaic institution, and that the time was not far distant when the nobles would be strong enough to form an "Aristocracy."

Conditions and events known to us in Hellas only by remote tradition or poetical sagas find their counterparts in the (comparatively) historic literature of Israel. Thus the synoecismus of Attica by "Theseus" is evidently in some sense parallel to the Deuteronomic legislation of Josiah.

One of the great riddles of Greek history is the "Homeric King" and his place in history. In the mythical period we learn (from Homer and the excavations) of large kingdoms ruled by kings who were "pastoral" in both senses, and who lived in magnificent "castles, standing among the huts of their dependants." In the historic period we find semi-constitutional kings of city-states. It is usual to attribute the change to the Dorian invasion. But in the fragmentary yet legible history of Judah we

shall follow the change from the "Mycenean" or "Homeric" kingdom of David and Solomon, 1000 B.C., to the monarchic city-state of Josiah and his sons, the royal power remaining all the time in the hands of one and the same dynasty.

We can go a stage further back even than that, and see how the Homeric kingdom itself came into existence.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

WE now turn to the earliest known events in Israel's story, and seek to trace step by step the political history of the nation, together with the development in religion which was the counterpart of that history.

Before the dawn of authentic history there are events in the lives of many nations which have bitten so deeply into the thought and temper of the people, that it is hypercriticism to discuss the question whether they actually occurred. The nation itself is the proof. Among such we may class the Exodus of Israel from Egypt.

A wandering tribe, Israel, driven by famine, had settled on the borders of the great empire. Ultimately they were reduced to the position of serfs, employed on the vast public works. To the vigorous spirit of the tribe this became intolerable, and at length they broke away to their old nomadic life in the desert.

No date can be assigned for this event, but it probably took place about the fourteenth century before the Christian Era.

Nomads have no history worth the name. The people, no doubt, wandered to and fro in the wilderness, following the pasture or the game. Occasionally they may have remained long enough in some favoured spots to plant and reap a harvest, but the halt was only temporary. We need not suppose that the whole tribe or league remained together ; it is, indeed, more probable, considering the fact that they must have been fairly numerous, that they split up and re-formed as occasion required. Their rendezvous was at the sacred well Kadesh.

The great name of the period is that of Moses, undoubtedly a historical character. What we know of him is well expressed in a poem written many centuries later :—

“ Moses commanded us a law (*torah*),
An inheritance for the assembly of Jacob.
He was king in Jeshurun (*i.e.* Israel)
When the heads of the people were gathered,
All the tribes of Israel together.”

We may paraphrase this by saying that such supreme authority as then existed, moral of course rather than political, was vested in Moses ; when combined action was called for he took the lead ; all difficult cases of dispute or ceremonial were referred to him, and his decisions formed valued precedents.

On two other matters only have we any information, the great primitive interests of War and Religion. Both of these will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. For the present we need only say that at times, after the manner of their kind, the Israelites appear to have raided more settled peoples, not always successfully; and that they had fierce encounters with the other nomads, the memory of the tribe Amalek surviving in this connection to the latest days.

Israel is the name of a league rather than of a simple tribe. The two main elements composing it were Rachel (the "ewe") and Leah (the "wild cow"). These in turn were probably subdivided, but we can go no further with certainty in speaking of the desert organisation, since we are unable to say what ancient tribes were wiped out in war, and what new tribes were formed after the conquest by separation from the parent stem or by incorporating the inhabitants of Canaan.

The tradition appears always to be very precise in fixing forty years as the period of the wanderings, but forty is really the favourite "round number" with the Israelites, and the tradition merely wishes to make plain that the men of the Exodus passed away, and that it was a later generation which entered Canaan.

The desire for fixed homes sprang up in the nomads, just as the desire for freedom had sprung up in

the serfs. We can no more "explain" these phenomena than we can "explain" the successive stages in the mental growth of an individual.

"*When Israel was a child, then I loved him; and called my son out of Egypt.*" So speaks the tenderest of Israel's prophets, in the name of Yahweh. But Israel was now reaching man's estate, with a deep unconscious yearning to express himself in the world, and a fixed habitation was an absolutely necessary condition for effective action.

The suitable lands were already all occupied, though probably not densely populated, and a footing had to be obtained in the good old-fashioned way at the point of the javelin. If the reader will consult the map, he will see the various divisions of the Western Semitic area. With all the races, except the Philistines, Israel had some degree of kinship.

In the North-east lay Syria (Aram), of which the chief towns, then or later, were Damascus, Hamath, and Kadesh-on-the-Orontes. From the Syrians the Israelites believed themselves to have sprung. "*A wandering Syrian was my ancestor*" is a phrase in the ancient ritual. Between the coast and the valley of the Jordan, and on northwards, lived the Canaanites or Phœnicians, whose world-famous towns, Tyre and Sidon, were already in existence. To the South-west, in the Shephēlah or Lowland, we find the Philistines, who have given their name, Palestine, to the whole country. They were

foreigners from over-sea (perhaps from Crete or Caria), and differed widely in several ways from the other races. Eastward of the Jordan, between the river and the desert, and thence southward, lived three Hebrew races of close relationship to Israel, viz. Ammon, Moab, and Edom. Between Philistia on the West, and the Dead Sea and Edom on the East, to the South of the Canaanites, dwelt, then or later, another collection of tribes, also of the Hebrew stock, as Simeon, Judah, Caleb, Kain, Jerahmeel. The tradition asserts that most of these were with Israel in the desert, and entered Canaan at the same time, but this is very doubtful, as they do not appear effectively in the history until centuries later. In any case, however, their early life was no doubt closely *parallel* to that of Israel.

Between Moab and Ammon was the Canaanite kingdom of Heshbon. This the Israelites attacked and overthrew, and thus obtained their first foothold in the country.

But this territory was too small for Israel, even with a Northern extension up the left bank of Jordan (Gilead), which they apparently took from Ammon. Accordingly under a general called Joshua they crossed Jordan, and attempted the conquest of the country between that river and the sea.

An examination of the map will show that the geography of Palestine is very simple. Between the Mediterranean and the valley of the Jordan

(which is below the sea-level) runs the Hill country, intersected by deep glens and rising to elevations of between 2000 and 3000 feet. In the North the Hill country deviates Westwards and forms the promontory of Carmel. The triangular plain of Jezreel, watered by the Kishon, is again followed, as we pass further North, by hills parallel to the coast-line. The country is about 140 miles long by 50 broad.

Our knowledge of the inhabitants of this country before the coming of Israel has been greatly increased by the discovery of the Tell el Amarna "letters." These are communications sent by various chiefs to the kings of Egypt. The history revealed in the letters is, briefly, that Egypt had at one time held sway as far as Babylonia and gradually lost it. Town after town revolted, or was captured, until even the Philistine country was independent of Egypt. The overlordship of the Empire of the Nile was apparently mainly a matter of tribute; there is nothing to suggest, for example, that Egyptian religion became a force in Syria. The letters are not in hieroglyphic, but in cuneiform script.

Two names of great interest appear in these political documents—Urusalim and Khabiri.

That Urusalim is identical with Jerusalem can hardly be questioned, and thus we learn that the original name was apparently not Jebus. Further, the town was an important one before the Hebrew invasion, not simply a hill fortress.

The identification of the Khabiri, who are represented as over-running the country, with the "Hebrews" stands on a very different footing. The great extent of their operations, together with the fact that they entered the land from the North, suggest that they are not the Israelites.

The political state of Canaan as revealed in this correspondence is in close accord with what we read in the books of Joshua and Judges. The people were divided into small communities independent of each other, each living in a walled village ruled over by its melek.

The inhabitants of each village were "brothers," *i.e.* the community was the primitive *gens* or kin which we find in so many parts of the world, if indeed it be not universal. Agriculture, including the cultivation of the vine, was practised by the Canaanites, and altogether they were much more advanced in the arts than the invading Israelites.

Rachel attacked the centre of the country, and Leah advanced against the North. Each is stated to have won a great victory over the coalised Canaanites. In the South the scene of the contest was the pass of Beth-horon, and the day is celebrated in the famous lines :—

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
 And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.
 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
 Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies."

In the North the victory was won at the "Waters of Merom"—wherever they were.

Israel thus obtained a footing in the land, but for a long time the situation was precarious. The nomads could not face the trained soldiery and chariots opposed to them in the Maritime Plain and the Plain of Jezreel. Even in the Hill country, to which they were thus confined, they were unable to reduce the fortified villages, and strongholds, and for a long time they continued to live in tents and caves.

When the first fierce conflict was over, Israelite and Canaanite lived side by side, on terms first peaceable and then friendly. Intermarriages took place, and a mixed race began to spring up. Fusion was inevitable, but it took centuries to accomplish it fully and to decide the great question which should be the dominant race. The issue but rarely expressed itself on the field of battle; it was for the most part a silent contest, fought out in the life of peace, to test whether the character of Israel or of Canaan were the more virile and enduring, and which was the true heir of the future. The victory lay ultimately with Israel; the mixed race which sprang up from the fusion of the two was Israel Canaanised, not Canaan Israelised.

Occasionally, as was natural, the different races actually took the field against one another. Thus the turning-point which gave Israel the supremacy

appears to be marked by the victory of Barak, as the close of the struggle is indicated by the capture of Jerusalem.

Barak was a prince or noble in Leah, the group of Northern tribes. He fought with the "kings of Canaan," led by Sisera, at "Taanach by the waters of Megiddo," on the hills to the south of the Plain of Jezreel. The Israelites were entirely successful, and pursued the fugitives across the Kishon.

This great battle is celebrated in a magnificent heroic poem ; here for the first time we are on firm standing-ground.

The poem is one of the best examples of heroic verse in the whole literature of the world. It recites the depressed state of Israel, the call to arms, the tribes which responded to the call, the victory and the pursuit, the death of Sisera, the dismay of his mother and her ladies. We have only to read it even in the English version to see how strangely they deceive themselves who picture the Israelites of the time as "savages," "Red Indians," and what not. They were essentially a civilised race—with many of the elements of civilisation, it is true, still *before* them, for they had not yet entered fully upon their inheritance. They are capable of what they have not yet had time to accomplish, and at least in one branch of art they have reached perfection.

No art springs into existence fully developed. Many poets must have sung the "Wars of Yahweh"

before the author of the Song of Deborah, as this poem is generally called. The thought of such poetry sheds a pleasant light over our mental picture of the merciless death-struggles with Amalek in the wilderness.

The mixed race which sprang up soon proved its own value. At least two of the early heroes, Abimelech and Jephthah, were sons of Israelite fathers and Canaanite mothers. The arts of the conquered were continued and gradually improved. Canaan supplied the villages and houses, the vineyards and olive-yards. But the nation was called Israel, and the parts of the country were known by the names of her tribes.

The organisation of the tribe was on the same primitive principle which we found among the Canaanites, viz. by kins or gentes (*mishpachoth*). Each gens consisted of a number of households, but they differed greatly among themselves in size and importance. The household had its father and the gens had its chief. These chiefs formed the government of the tribe, at least so far as external politics extended, and they led their kinsmen in war. The principal difference between Israel and Canaan lay in the far greater amount of independence possessed by the gentes of the latter.

With the Israelite supremacy this old independence of the gens in its walled village came to an end, and their meleks ceased to exist. The last

we read of is Abimelech, the half-caste melek of Shechem.

This process was, of course, in no sense an "expulsion of the kings." It simply meant that the village was absorbed for executive and sovereign purposes in a wider unit—the tribe. The civic life of the village, if we may dignify it by such a name, was continued by the *Zekenim*, or "Elders," an institution whose origin is lost in the remotest antiquity, and whose connection with its name appears to have become shadowy even before the dawn of history.

Already in the time of Barak the tribes of Israel were established in the form in which they remained to the end. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin formed the group of Rachel. Zebulun and Issachar, together with Gad and Asher, were the sons of Leah. Naphtali and Dan may originally have been connected with Rachel, but in the history we find them incorporated in Leah. Besides these the old and vanishing tribe of Reuben is mentioned in the Song of Deborah. The Judahite tribes of the South were not members of the League.

In times of peace there was no effective bond among the tribes, but as soon as war threatened to break out a Military Dictator was appointed to command the united forces. The tribe most affected was entitled to appoint him, but the moment the appointment was made it was his duty to summon

the whole League, and it was their duty to obey the summons. The literature contains numerous allusions to this subject, tribes complaining that they have not been summoned or being censured for non-appearance.

If the campaign was successful the victorious general enjoyed much consideration for the rest of his life, a consideration which even passed on to his sons. He received the title *Shophet*, or Judge, which, however, did not signify the holder of an office, but rather simply a leading man to whom it was customary to refer disputes.

CHAPTER V

PRIMITIVE RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS

IN seeking to recover for ourselves some approximation to the religion at this early date, whether of the peoples of the Mediterranean coast in general or of those of the Levant in particular, we must at once dismiss from our minds Christianity and other world-religions which avowedly rest on a reasoned and moral basis. Equally must we get rid of the official and organised pantheons of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon, since they are the religious counterparts of a complicated political system. Nor will the later Judaism, worshipping the Righteous Creator of the World, help us, since it is the result of a long and strange spiritual education.

But we must guard with even greater care against supposing that primitive religion bore any great resemblance to the horrid cults of actual savages or of decadent peoples, based on calculated cruelty and obscenity.

We shall expect to find the religion analogous to the other sides of life—simple, joyous, confident, buoyant ; crude if you will, certainly not more tender or modest than social life generally ; but above all expansive, and already containing in itself the *seeds* of the worships of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Pallas Athene, “Jehovah,” and even of the Almighty Father of the Christian Creed.

Into the obscure roots of Religion itself we need not seek here to penetrate. When we first meet with it in the world’s story, the great point to notice carefully is that religion is essentially the *tie that binds*.

First and foremost, the tie that binds the clansmen together ; where we use the word “clan” to mean any union based on supposed relationship, the gens, the tribe, or the league. Probably the god of the gens came first, and the evolution of the religious idea went on *pari passu* with the social development ; but Israel, as we have seen, was already a league at the dawn of her history.

The clan-god may be approached from various points of view, and the difficulty is to hit the proper mean between mere crude conceptions, which can never have formed the religion of any sane man, and ideas borrowed from later philosophic thought. Primitive man is implicitly an idealist and explicitly a materialist ; he is ever labouring to express ideas in the vocabulary of matter.

Thus we may say that the clan-god is an imaginary relative, the brother or blood-kin of every clansman ; or, going to the other extreme, that he is the abstract idea of the clan. Though apparently very far apart, both these ideas have truth in them ; neither reaches the essence of religion. The god is primarily the *bringer of help*, that power in the clansman, and yet greater than himself, which enables him to accomplish more than he could do alone. Thus when the clan attacks and overthrows the enemy, no one clansman has done it, nor have all the clansmen individually done it : the victory has been gained by the sum-total of the clansmen *plus something more*. That something more is the god of the clan.

Other ideas besides mere help in battle become associated, notably the god is the giver of advice, or rather instruction, in difficulties. Further, the continuity of the clan involves the continuity of the divine help, and thus arises the picture of the invisible chief, undying, but indissolubly bound up with the collective life of his "brothers." For "the blood is the life," and therefore the god and his clan must form one kin by blood.

The clan and the god may fall out ; disasters and misfortunes indicate that the god is offended. The reasons for the god's anger seem to us extraordinarily childish, and we feel ashamed of the men of antiquity, who, as late as the days of the Roman

Empire, believed that the divine power was alienated because the wrong beast was offered, or some other ritual detail not performed according to custom. But the explanation is simple enough. Plague, defeat, or famine indicated that *something* had gone wrong between the tribe and its higher ideal self, its personified destiny (as *we* might say), and until the Jews proclaimed the ethical aspect of religion, and so gave a wholly new turn to the idea of "God's wrath," the only way in which the tribe *could* have offended was in ritual. Moreover, it is possible to read some element of holy fear in the seeming childishness. God requires his service to be carried out in a particular way; it is for us to obey his commands, not to question.

Among settled tribes religion binds the land of the clan in the same unity. "Privati ac separati agri apud eos nihil est," says Caesar of the Suebi, choosing his adjectives with his usual care; and the rule appears to have been universal in early days. The whole land was the tribe's land, the god's land, the "house of the god" in Semitic phrase—a phrase to be carefully noted, since it was also used for the temple or shrine. The local god was the husband (*baal*) of the land which he fertilised by springs or rain. Hence arises the conception of the divine *father*, the progenitor of clansmen, cattle and corn; he begets them all from the fertile womb of the soil.

The object of the cultus or worship was to renew the bond which subsisted between the god and the clan. Hence worship was eminently a social or public function; personal religion was unknown, or bore the character of magic, that travesty of religion which runs side by side with it throughout its history. The earliest known form of worship is sacrifice, which consists of two parts, the blood-rite and the feast. When the victim was slain the blood was applied to the god and to the worshippers to express and renew the kinship, the one life. As the god was invisible it was necessary to find some conventional substitute for him, and thus arises the worship of stocks and stones. The stone-god might either be permanent or chosen for the needs of the moment. The sprinkling of the blood on the worshippers died out except in certain special rites.

After the blood-rite followed the feast. The sacred portions were the blood, which flowed into a hole in the ground, and the fat over the kidneys, which was roasted on the sacred stone. The rest of the victim was eaten by the worshippers. It is important to notice that there is only one word for "sacrifice" and "feast." It was only on high days that meat was eaten, and every meat-eating was a sacrifice.

Cakes and wine entered the ritual, possibly as substitutes for flesh and blood, but more likely as

an independent though cognate rite. Just as the god shared in the meat-feast, so he shared in the harvest and received the first-fruits. Such a festival obviously belongs only to a settled people.

Two facts will attract the attention of the reader. First, religion and nationality were different aspects of the same thing. The one was no more a matter of choice than the other. "Conversion" was possible only to the refugee. And second, the god worshipped was an object of reverence but not of slavish fear; not a hostile power to be propitiated, but *our* god, our defence and shield, a very present help in trouble. No doubt the worshipper who came into personal contact without due precautions ran the risk of losing his life. Even the domestic hearth may be a source of danger. But the god worshipped was the home-god; the god of the known circle of the clan. The earth *outside* that charmed circle was full of darkness and cruel habitations. Our spiritual ancestors found God, not in metaphysical abstractions like "Pure Being," nor yet in negations like "The Unknown," but in the only sphere where the great discovery is of practical value—in daily life.

The primitive shrine was simply a piece of ground, enclosed but not roofed, within which stood a heap of earth or stones—the altar-god. A hut, perhaps designed at first simply for holding the sacrificial tools, became in time a dwelling for the priests, and subsequently acquired a greater sanctity

than the altar itself. Yet to the end of their history the sanctuaries of the old world had the altar in the open air outside the temple.

The Hebrew root K-D-Sh and the words derived from it require careful notice. "Holy," "holiness," "consecrate," are the renderings they receive; rightly enough from a late standpoint, but not for early writings. The root signifies "belonging to a god, and therefore debarred from ordinary use." The shrine and the altar; the priest, the worshippers and the sacrifice; the knives, basins, and forks employed in the rite,—all these are "holy," either permanently or temporarily. We have still the same idea in the "consecration" of churches, etc. The priest may be a most evil man, but he is "holy" in the primitive sense. The idea of the consecration of the heart, the life, the thoughts, in fact all that we understand by holiness, is not a primitive religious idea. Some writers have used the word "taboo" as a substitute for "holy," but this introduces a train of alien associations, and it seems better to adopt the Hebrew word itself—*kodesh*—and use it indiscriminately as noun and adjective without regard to grammatical nicety.

The strangest use of this root is its application to the harlots who lived in cottages within the sacred enclosure. These were not loose women whose presence was winked at; they were part of the regular establishment, sacred to the god, *kodesh*.

A vast amount of virtuous horror has been expended on this "frightful" and "debasing" institution; all of which might very well have been spared. The prostitutes of our Christian streets will afford us ample food for moral reflection, without worrying about these Syrian girls of three thousand years ago, when sex relations were understood quite differently. The simple fact is that primitive man understood worship as "rejoicing before his god," and accordingly enjoyed himself in his own way in the temple courts, with abundance of roast meat and wine, and the society of one of the women of the shrine. If our idea of "joy in the Lord" is something very different, it is because we stand at the end, and he at the beginning, of a vast education and development. "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Even when we find the word ending in *im* instead of *oth*, there is no need to run rabid, but rather to take down Cornelius Nepos and read his judicious remarks. Every stone we hurl at the Western Semites is aimed also at the Greeks, and it is a foolish occupation to throw stones at Sophocles, for example.

This custom does not appear to have prevailed among the Israelites and other nomadic tribes of the desert. All intercourse of the sexes was with them a violation of the *kodesh* of the shrine.

It is well to notice in passing that just as the word "holy" is primarily a ritual term, so the word for "righteous" is primarily legal, and signifies "having the law on one's side." Thus "to take away the righteousness of the righteous from him" is not, as we might imagine, to corrupt a good man's morals, but to defraud a man of his legal rights.

However simple primitive religious ideas may have been, we are on no account to suppose that religion in the earliest historic times presented the aspect of a pine forest, a collection of stately clan-gods each in his clearly defined sphere; rather it calls to mind a tropical jungle, where the great trees are partially obscured by a wild growth of shrubs and creepers of all sorts. Gods of rivers, of trees, of springs, of households, exist either independent of or wholly or partially identified with the gods of the clans. Other rites besides the sacrificial meal are found, offerings of clothing, offerings of hair, cuttings in the flesh, etc.

Of one rite only is there need to speak here—human sacrifice. Refined people at the present day do not like the idea. Where we find such rites, they "destroy any illusion as to the ennobling character of the religion." And yet these very superior persons might try to explain the paradox that of all the stories of the ancient world precisely the most tender in their pathos are those of the sacrifice of

Isaac, of Jephthah's daughter, of Polyxena, of Iphigeneia, of Rizpah's sons.

Human sacrifices may be divided into two classes, where the victim is a clansman, and where the victim is an enemy. In both cases the underlying idea appears to be that extreme need requires an extreme remedy. When the danger is at its utmost either one of the clan may be offered, or the enemy may be "devoted" to destruction. In neither case does it involve the idea of a "bloodthirsty" god, for the predominant thought is that this is the only way, rather than that the god personally wishes for this. Probably in the wild exultation of victory captives were frequently sacrificed whose lives had not been specially devoted beforehand. Yet let us at least be fair to these old Semites, and while we profess ourselves duly shocked and pained at the spectacle of an antique Benjamite putting a captive to death in the rude stone circle at Gilgal, let us admit in the same breath that at Rome, *eleven hundred years later*, the Rome of Vergil and Horace, of Cicero and Tacitus, human sacrifice still formed a recognised part of the triumph of every victorious general.

From the earliest days we find two classes of sacred ministers, men whose business it is to mediate between God and man. These are the priests and the prophets. The functions of the two overlap to some extent, and it is conceivable (though hardly likely) that they sprang from one earlier institution.

The essential difference between them is suggested by the positions in which we find them—the priest officiates at a shrine, the prophet goes where he pleases. The priest works by visible means, altars, sacrifices, kodesh lots, etc., everywhere he has his tools. Even when he leaves the shrine he must take with him his ephod or his Urim. The prophet has no tools, except occasionally a musical instrument. He is the man of God, the spokesman of the divine. He certainly frequents the shrine, but wherever he may be the inspiration comes upon him, and he speaks. The priest's function is thus much wider than the prophet's, since the latter is confined to the one business of declaring the divine will, yet the prophet has obviously unlimited possibilities in his one direction, and when "the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets," he will have power to sway the world.

The theory of the Christian Church is that the Priesthood is an order of men set apart for the discharge of sacred functions, which are the same throughout the world. From Rome to Peking there is but one Christian Sacrifice, which can be offered by any priest. Non-essentials may vary and obvious considerations may suggest the employment of particular priests in particular places, but *quâ* priests they are *interchangeable*, and any priest may offer at any altar. This conception is a development of the later Jewish priesthood with its single altar. The

latter dates from the legislation of Josiah, and is not the primitive type.

We should go still further astray, however, if we supposed that in the ancient world because there was not *one* priesthood therefore there was no priesthood at all ; that any man as occasion served might discharge the sacred functions. The person of the priest was regulated with as much accuracy as the other details of the rite ; but instead of one priesthood, there was a practically unlimited number. The priests were not interchangeable ; the right man at one altar or on one occasion would be the wrong man at another altar or on another occasion.

It is not too much perhaps to say that every member of the governing class of an ancient state was a priest or priestess at some period of life, if we include under the word all those who performed such rites as the sacred dances.

Hence the error of the Broadchurchmen, who, when they find this king or that prophet sacrificing, rejoice over him, as a sort of House of Commons Protestant, who brushes aside the priests. "Solomon offered sacrifices in the Temple without the intervention of any priest." Very probably ; and very probably Jephthah sacrificed his daughter *propria manu* for the same all-sufficient reason, viz. that he was himself the priest indicated by custom for that special rite.

In the earliest time civil and sacerdotal position

went hand in hand. Every man was priest in his own household ; the head of the gens was priest of the gens ; and so forth.

Yet in the historic period we undoubtedly find everywhere men who are definitely called *priests* (kohenim, hieries, sacerdotes) in distinction to men in general, and sometimes to rulers in particular. Who are these ?

These priests, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, are simply those whose sole or principal occupation in life was to perform sacred rites. Great numbers of men, as we have said, held priesthoods, but only if his time were taken up with it, and if he lived by it, was a man termed a priest.

Such priesthoods, where the priest's "secular" position was overshadowed by the "spiritual" or even completely lost, arose apparently in two ways.

First, from the greater conservatism in matters relating to the gods than in matters relating to men. Thus if a civil office were abolished the sacred rites had still to be performed by some one who held the office simply *ad hoc*. The rex sacrificulus and the archon basileus are the great examples of this. Further, it was easier to usurp a government than a priesthood, since men can choose a king, but only the god can choose his priest. Or, if the site of the tribe or village were changed, it might still be necessary to perform sacred rites in the ancient shrine. We can imagine many such circumstances which

would give rise to priesthoods without secular jurisdiction.

Secondly, such priesthoods would arise naturally with the growing complexity of life. A large and costly shrine involves resident ministers; an elaborate ritual involves experts as officiants. Even if the "king" continues to perform the act of sacrifice, the resident official must become more and more the priest in the eyes of the people; all sacred rites of later growth will naturally fall to his share, until at last the king's part will be reduced to a minimum, or vanish altogether.

This helps to explain why so many ancient priesthoods were held by aliens. The shrine was the place of refuge; the refugees rendered service to the god, and in time they, or their descendants, were rewarded with the priesthood.

Besides his work as sacrificer, the priest was the giver of divine *torah* or instruction. In all cases of doubt and difficulty men repaired to the shrine for advice. The priest had, as we have indicated, various mechanical appliances for ascertaining the divine will. But in course of ages a traditional body of instruction grew up, being handed on by each priest to his successor. Thus the priest had opportunities for giving instruction, without recourse to his instruments, and the sphere of that instruction widened. To this extent, therefore, he assumed the functions of his brother the prophet.

The early history of Prophecy is closely interwoven with the wars of Yahweh, and it is of the utmost importance, therefore, to have clear ideas on the subject of primitive warfare.

It cannot be too emphatically asserted that in certain stages of civilisation war was a normal, even a necessary, feature. We are so accustomed at the present day to regard war as a "hideous anomaly" that we have difficulty in believing that at any period it formed an integral part of civilised life. What must justify this state of things to the most sensitive is the obvious consideration that whole departments of moral and mental qualities, which find ample scope in *our* life of peace, must have remained dormant if they had not in the first instance been called into activity in battle. Obedience, endurance, courage, loyalty, chivalry, devotion—in a word, half the ties that bind man to man and make life worth living, had practically no sphere for exercise in the monotonous daily life of the primitive clan, and only came into visible existence by the constant training of men in the field. When, therefore, we find the buoyant little races of antiquity so frequently at war, we must dismiss our idea of "horrors" and learn to look on it not only as the wine of life, the highest enjoyment and excitement, but as the educative influence which led them on to what they finally became; above all, we must think of it as regular, expected, provided for.

War, of course, is a most comprehensive term and includes very different things. When a neighbouring tribe tries stealthily to drive off the cattle, and the clansmen turn out to chase the marauders away, that is "war." When Assyria pours like a flood over a happy country and ruins it for ever, that, too, is "war." The wars of the early Mediterranean tribes were for the most part much nearer the former of these extremes than the latter.

The primitive community appears to have had almost annual contests with its different neighbours. Pretexts, of course, were never wanting. When the clan meditated an attack they first invited their prophet or priest to say whether the day they thought of was approved by their god. If the answer was favourable the warriors repaired to the local shrine, and there the priest "consecrated the war," *i.e.* made the warriors or their weapons temporarily *kodesh*, no doubt by some variety of the familiar blood-rite. The clansmen on the other side were generally quite ready on their part, and the two forces—a few hundred men apiece—met in battle. Sunset gave the signal for the cessation of hostilities, and all was over until the next campaign. The bodies of the slain were buried with due rites and lamentations.

The wars of expansion were of course more serious, for here the one clan definitely attempted to assert a permanent authority over the other, and

when the cities began to grow it was not uncommon for the victors to destroy the vanquished town and to deport all its inhabitants, divine and human, to their own, in order to swell its numbers and importance. Yet even here there was a decency required. The Deuteronomic legislation on the subject of war is of course late, and is itself a quaint blending of theological ferocity and ultra politeness, but in the old customs there was something corresponding to the spirit which enacted that the attack was not to be made on a city until it had first been invited to surrender, that no fruit-trees were to be cut down to make engines of war for the siege, that the man who fell in love with a captive woman was to marry her by honest rites. We have frequent indications that it was considered quite contrary to the rules of the game to push an advantage too far, and that such conduct was regarded as being likely in the long-run to injure the victors. After the battle there was sometimes, as has been said, a human sacrifice in honour of the victorious god, but it was generally confined to the captured king or princes.

It may not unnaturally be asked why, if war were such a customary and regular proceeding, the siege of Jerusalem evoked such passionate lamentations. The answer is obvious, but important. The early wars had even in defeat been disciplinary: they braced and trained the nation. The siege of Jerusalem came late, and was the collapse of the national

life. The conquest of a primitive clan was not a matter of very serious consequence, even when the clansmen had to remove some miles across country and build new huts within another mud wall. But Jerusalem was a specialised form—a great self-governing city; and with the deportation of her people, all that had made her valuable appeared to have come to a full end.

In a war-like race like early Israel the spears were never allowed to rust very long. The prophets, no doubt, were a flourishing institution in the forgotten wars of the desert. It was their part to say whether the day chosen was approved by Yahweh; and they had also to chant patriotic songs to stir up the spirit of the warriors. These they accompanied by frantic dances, ending in a trance or swoon. They had also to forewarn the clan of coming dangers, especially from the attacks of their enemies. At the dawn of history the four ideas are closely interwoven—Yahweh, Israel, War, Prophecy.

CHAPTER VI

EFFECT OF THE CONQUEST ON ISRAELITE RELIGION

THE belief and worship of the Israelites were both very simple when they broke into the land of Canaan. Their creed might be summed up in the name-formula Ahijah or Achi-YAH, *i.e.* "Yahweh is (our) Kinsman"; and the ritual consisted in the renewal of the blood-bond with him.

Yahweh was not a war god in the later sense of a god invoked exclusively before a battle, but from the nature of the desert life this aspect of the divine was a prominent one. It was in war that the League was knit together as one man, and to say that the unity realised itself, was to say in theological language that Yahweh was present. When the tribes rushed into battle Yahweh hurled himself with them into the fight, sometimes almost visibly seated on a storm-cloud, beating down his foes and theirs with lightning and hail. It was in his honour that prisoners were sacrificed after a victory, and however

hungry the warriors might be, Yahweh must not be "defrauded" of his share of the blood before the captured sheep and oxen were devoured.

The altar-stone was the visible presence of the god, but we should naturally expect that a wandering tribe would have some other symbol to be always with them on their journeys and even in their battles. Such we find in an oblong wooden box, the celebrated "ark of God." From a comparatively early date to the present time men have been puzzled to understand the temper of a race which could think of their god as a box, and have exercised their ingenuity to conjure up something more suitable which was either in the box or on it. But in dealing with primitive men we must get rid of all arbitrary notions of "theogonic capacity" and deal with facts as we find them. The ark itself undoubtedly was Yahweh to the ancient Israelite in the same sense in which any material object can be said to be God.

The box certainly contained two stones, but it is fairly obvious that these were not the god himself but simply the lots by which the priest ascertained the divine will. The *opening* of the ark was thus the greatest sin, not because Yahweh dwelt inside, but because it was a sacrilegious attempt to obtain divine counsel without the authorised person and the due rites.

Yahweh was the god of the League. Every

minor division had its own sacred rites, and therefore originally its own god. The gods of the tribes were at an early date identified with Yahweh, but the gods of the kins (*nishpachoth*) survived for centuries, if we are right in so interpreting the *teraphim*.

The homeless nomads knew their god as their "kinsman," the settled Canaanites, on the other hand, regarded him primarily as "husband" and "father." These two great ideas, the god of the clan and the god of the soil, by no means exclude each other, indeed they formed only two aspects of the same divine "helper." Yet it is obvious that they might be placed in opposition to each other, and such actually was the case in Israel. We are not, of course, to imagine anything at all resembling the religious wars or the religious controversies of modern times. In the first battles and in such encounters as that described in the Song of Deborah no doubt the symbols of the gods were present with the opposing forces; but after the fusion of the races had begun, the real contest lay in the dim, unexpressed conflict of ideas in the untrained mind of each Israelite. Israel's business in life was to defend himself against his enemies and to wring a living out of the rather unkindly soil, and his only interest in theological problems was so to conduct his ritual that the unseen power might not be offended. Political and social fusion invariably

meant religious fusion in the ancient world. In Shechem under the half-caste Abimelech we are actually told that the community worshipped El Berith. Now El Berith signifies "the god of the covenant," and the covenant can scarcely be other than that between the Canaanites of Shechem and an Israelite kin. Such fusions must have been common.

Yet the thought of a late writer (the compiler of the Book of Judges) that Israel worshipped Yahweh in time of war and the Baalim in time of peace obviously contains much that is true.

Baal stood for

Separation of village from village,
Agriculture and the Harvest-home,
The delight and inspiration of Wine,
The enjoyment of Sex,
And Luxury generally.

Yahweh stood for

The Unity of the League,
The excitement of Battle,
Self-restraint in drink and in love,
And the hardships of Nomadic Life.

In times of peace Israel followed the fashion of the country. The local god was worshipped after the Canaanite manner, and was regarded at the same time as Yahweh. The cycle of agricultural feasts was followed and the presence of the kodesh harlots allowed, although it seems certain (and

indeed only natural) that all intercourse with women was a violation of the primitive kodesh of Yahweh's shrine.

But when serious war broke out and the League was summoned, it was Yahweh, and Yahweh only, who was worshipped with the primitive desert rites.

Throughout the "period of the Judges," as it is erroneously called (the "period of Tribal Independence" would be better), that is to say, from the Conquest to the founding of the Monarchy, the great religious question gradually worked itself to a solution. The idea of separate gods disappeared, all the great shrines were definitely in honour of the national god; but, on the other hand, the cultus had very largely become that of the Canaanites, *i.e.* based on agriculture.

As the race-conflict ended in the victory of Israel, but Israel Canaanised; so the religious conflict ended in the victory of *Y*ahweh, but Yahweh Baalised. Yahweh was now the baal of the Land, the divine husband.

By writers of every shade of opinion this great change is regarded as a spiritual and moral declension; yet it is hard to see that this judgment is justified. The "strenuous" life always appeals to us in a superficial way, but no man can seriously maintain that the settled agricultural life in Canaan was really inferior to the wanderings in the desert in a state of constant readiness for war. The change

in religion was to a great extent the reflection of the change in life. Baalism contained much that was true and beautiful which cannot be detected in primitive Yahwism. When we trace back the ideas of Christianity century by century, through ever cruder manifestations, it is obvious that some have their roots not in Israel, but in Canaan. If the thought of Christ as the "Elder Brother" finds its origin in the blood-kin god of the desert, none the less does the picture of the "Church's Spouse" find its first rough sketch in the husband of the soil.

How the later Jews arrived at their abhorrence of Canaan and Baal will be seen in the sequel. It had its origin largely in the formation of the city-state. In order to justify it at the present day, people seize on one detail of Canaanite custom, and exaggerate it out of all reason, judging it by modern ideas. To any unbiassed reader of the old literature it will be perfectly obvious that in Israel as elsewhere sexual intercourse was only regarded as wrong where it violated the rights of some other man, husband or father; and however well the primitive kodesh of Yahweh's shrine may have served the later prophets, it can hardly be denied that in the desert it was based on the incompatibility of self-indulgence and warfare.

At the time of the foundation of the Monarchy we may therefore have a fairly clear idea of the religious state of Israel. Yahweh was the one

national god worshipped throughout the land, though no doubt many local nature-worships (of springs, trees, etc.) survived. Every village had its *bamah* or high place, corresponding to the *prytaneion* of a Greek town, the local shrine where both public and family sacrificial feasts were held. These high places were of greatly varying importance, and each tribe had one great sanctuary where the warriors were summoned when occasion required. In Benjamin the tribal temple was at Gilgal; in Ephraim, at Shiloh; in Manasseh, at Ophrah; in Gilead, at Mizpeh; in Naphtali, at Kedesh. Zebulun and Issachar had apparently a very famous sanctuary in common, but (it is one of the odd *lacunae* of history) its name has not been handed down. Probably it was one of the well-known villages in that district, but we have no means for determining *which*.

The Ark was at Shiloh, but does not appear to have conferred any national character on that shrine. During one of the campaigns with the Philistines it fell into their hands, and though it was afterwards returned, it had apparently suffered greatly in prestige. Shiloh itself was destroyed soon after, and Shechem became the tribal sanctuary of Ephraim.

All these shrines were originally Canaanite, and the name Yahweh was simply substituted for that of the local god. This fusion must have been harder where the divine being was a goddess or even a group of goddesses, as apparently was the

case at the Benjamite shrine Anathoth. Yet neither gender nor number stood in the way if the name Antothijah is really a formula signifying "Yahweh is Anathoth."

With the shrines were also taken over the legends, where these are really ancient. Thus, for example, the beautiful legend of Bethel about the ladder set up to heaven probably comes to us from the ancient Canaanites.

Of recurring feasts two may be supposed to have come from the desert—those of the new moon and the new year. The latter was called Pesách, which our translation renders Passover. It appears to have been a redemption of the first-born, and the peculiarity of the rite was the splashing of the doorway with the sacrificial blood.

The three great agricultural feasts are Canaanite—the feast of Unleavened Bread, the feast of Weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles. The first of these marks the beginning of the corn-harvest, and was held simultaneously with the Pesach. The second, fifty days later, marks the end of the same harvest. The feast of Tabernacles is the great Vintage Festival.

We have a notice of how the people of Shechem held the Vintage Feast in the shrine of El Berith. The god, of course, shared in the rejoicing, and to this Jotham refers when he speaks of "*wine which cheereth god and man.*" Possibly after the wine-cup

had gone round sufficiently often, even the grim face of the idol seemed to smile.

That images of gods were unknown to Israel in the desert seems fairly certain, unless the teraphim had some definite animal (or other) form, which is at least incapable of proof. The primitive stone-god was in fact both altar and image in one. Whether the Canaanite shrines had images is another question, but most probably when Israel entered the land these were at least still uncommon, and the deity was simply represented by one or more stones. The use of several stones to represent one god may seem strange, but it is accounted for by a detail of the ritual which occurred in some sacrifices, viz. that the victim was divided into portions, and the worshippers walked or danced between them.

The evolution of the statue is not quite plain, but it is probable that the altar was first marked with some symbol to denote the god and afterwards rudely carved. As the top had to be saucer-shaped to hold the burning fat, a difficulty was created which was overcome by making the statue distinct from the altar. The plurality of sacred stones would render this differentiation easier.

In the period under notice such images seem to be somewhat rare, as the tribe of Dan had to steal theirs from Micah. It is specially mentioned that Jerubbaal set up a golden Ephod—whatever that was—at Ophrah. The great shrine at Gilgal was

apparently furnished with "carvings," which may or may not have been the same as the stones forming the "Circle" from which the name was derived.

The priesthoods at this period were closely connected with the civil authority, but already a class of specialist priests was springing up. These were the Levites, afterwards so famous in history. Who they were is quite uncertain, as their origin is lost not only in obscurity, but in contradictions. Yet one may "hazard a wide conjecture" that they were the remains of the old Canaanite nobility. It must never be forgotten that the practical value of the hereditary right of the priests lay in the fact that it secured to the clan the services of a trained successor. At a time when nothing was to be learned from books, and the whole safety of the people lay in the proper execution of the minutiae of ritual, the priest would obviously keep the secret as far as possible from every one except his own son. When Micah congratulates himself, "*Now know I that Yahweh will do me good, seeing I have a Levite for priest,*" the thought uppermost in his mind is that he has got a man who is (in the words of the rubric) perfect and well expert in the things appertaining to the Ecclesiastical Administration. And where would such men naturally be found except in the descendants of those who had administered the *sacra* for generations?

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM OF SAUL

THE struggles of early Israel are not of engrossing interest in themselves. There were brave men, no doubt, who performed deeds of heroism, but for two hundred years the battles are rather of the "kite and crow" order. The great net result of that period is the fusion with the Canaanites and the adoption of settled habits. The wars were not always successful, and in the eleventh century B.C. we find Israel under the power of the Philistines. The spirit of the nation indeed was by no means crushed. The prophets danced and sang, endeavouring to stir up Yahweh's people to the fighting pitch; and gradually the conviction arose that what was needed was a permanent head for the nation.

The tribe of Benjamin was *cor cordium* of the League. The old legend relates that Benjamin was born in the land, and that Rachel died in giving birth to him; which may probably be a poetical method of stating the fact that Benjamin hived off

from Ephraim - Manasseh after the Conquest, and thus broke up the unity of the central Southern tribe. Benjamin lay to the South of Ephraim, but we cannot interpret his name as meaning "Son of the South," as it is obviously more than a coincidence that the tribe whose members were all left-handed should have a name whose most natural meaning is "Son of the Right Hand." We can hardly explain this peculiarity otherwise than by supposing that there was a tribal mutilation, in the not uncommon form of removal of a finger-joint, which caused the Benjamites to carry their shields on their right arms and wield the javelin or sword with the left. The statement of the Chronicler that the Benjamites were ambidextrous is in exact accord with what we should expect in his time, long after the mutilation in question had been given up as idolatrous.

This mutilation must have been adopted from the local Canaanites as the result of a definite incorporation with them. This was probably the occasion of the separation of Benjamin from Ephraim, and the cause of that dislike of Benjamin which is noticeable in some parts of the narrative. The saying, "*Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin,*" though occurring in a late section, has an antique ring about it, going back to the time when Benjamin was still a taunting nick-name.

When the rest of the League had followed Benjamin's example and accepted the inevitable

fusion, this tribe, though perhaps the smallest, became the real centre of unity, so that as late as the time of S. Paul to be a Benjamite was to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Their land lay between Bethel on the North and Jerusalem on the South. Neither of these places was of first-rate importance in the early part of the eleventh century. Jerusalem was still held by the "Jebusites," apparently the local variety of Canaanite. A large number of well-known villages and shrines are to be found in the hill country of Benjamin, but the tribal sanctuary was Gilgal in the valley of the Jordan. Gilgal stands to Jerusalem somewhat as Alba Longa to Rome. It is the earliest centre of the great development which is associated with the more famous name. Here the story places the camp of Joshua when he entered Canaan; but we stand on firmer ground when we learn that from this sanctuary the hero (or clan) Ehud set out across Jordan to fight with fat Eglon of Moab. The ancient name still perhaps survives in Jiljulieh, a small pool four miles from the Jordan.

The accounts of the origin of the monarchy vary, but all connect it with the name of Samuel, around whom legend has gathered freely. Following the oldest account, which contains in itself no obvious improbability and was evidently committed to writing at an early date, we may narrate the story as follows:—

Samuel was an elderly Benjamite noble of distinction. He held a priesthood of some sort which gave him an important position in Gilgal and other shrines of his tribe. He was on friendly terms with the prophets and had himself a great reputation as a Seer, *i.e.* a person gifted with "second sight."

One day as Samuel was proceeding to the *bamah* or shrine of some town (name not mentioned) to pontificate at the sacrifice and feast, in company with thirty "elders" and guests, he was stopped by a young man called Saul, who was anxious for information about certain she-asses which his father had lost.

Samuel at once recognised in him the man he was looking for, the man whom Yahweh would make ruler over Israel. Accordingly he first invited him to the feast and then in private anointed him with oil. This, however, was in no way a coronation, but purely a secret intimation of the destiny in store for him; in fact he was to keep the whole matter quiet until a suitable occasion offered for him to assert himself. The Philistines were too strong to be attacked until the right moment came.

That occasion was not long in presenting itself. In the unending border warfare of Gilead, Nahash the king of Ammon, who for the moment had the upper hand, had so far forgotten himself that he refused to accept the surrender of the village of Jabesh, except on the condition that he should put out the right

eyes of the leading men (elders). This plain violation of the decencies of friendly warfare enraged Saul past endurance. Cutting up some oxen, he sent the pieces throughout the country as a sort of "fiery cross," and an intimation what they might expect who refused to attend the summons. The League crowded in and marched to Jabesh. As usual a single battle ended the campaign, and Saul's position was established. The victorious army marched back to Gilgal for the religious rites with which a campaign was always brought to a close, and there they made Saul king of the League with great feasting and rejoicing.

This account is certainly relatively old, for the writer is quite whole-hearted and has no suspicion that this "Salomonic" or absolute monarchy was not such a valuable political institution after all. Two points are obvious. The monarchy was essentially military in its origin; and the king represented the League "in permanent session."

No doubt the eyes of the most thoughtless of the shouting crowd at Gilgal were already directed to the Philistine War, which every one could see would be a lengthy matter. But thoughtful men like Samuel may well have looked beyond that to the influence the monarchy would have in restraining the other states from attacking Israel. Their object must have been to seek peace by preparing for war. A practical desire to be allowed to cultivate the

ever-growing arts of peace rather than a conscious straining to realise the ideal unity of Israel, was therefore the motive for the foundation of the monarchy. As such it marks a definite stage in the history of civilisation. Men have by no means lost their love of war, but they have already secured a sufficiently valuable life of peace to make them desire very strongly to keep the fighting out of their own territory.

It was not long before the War of Independence broke out. Unfortunately a disagreement occurred between Saul and Samuel at the very beginning. It was inevitable that the question should arise how far the new office of King superseded the priesthoods of the old nobles. Saul appears to have acted with great self-restraint in the matter. Samuel had formerly had the right to "consecrate the war" when Benjamin assembled at Gilgal, and the king conceded it to him now. Samuel, however, did not put in an appearance at the time he had himself fixed, and Saul naturally consecrated the war himself. When Samuel at length arrived he did not conceal his anger.

We need not see in this any petty chagrin on the part of Samuel. He was probably genuinely afraid that Yahweh would be offended at this violation of religious custom, and that therefore the campaign would be a failure.

We know that Samuel subsequently vindicated

his right to the priesthood at Gilgal, for when Saul returned in triumph from his war against Amalek it was Samuel who took the principal part and “*hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh.*”

The War of Independence was the most heroic part of Israel's history. Very few warriors answered Saul's summons to Gilgal when the critical moment came. The enthusiasm produced by the campaign against Ammon had evaporated, and many Israelites definitely threw in their lot with the Philistines, while others hid themselves in the caves or retired across Jordan. But the fewer the men the greater the glory, and small companies of brave men who had nothing left to lose except their lives, boldly attacked the fortresses held by the suzerain power. Saul was the heart and soul of the movement; and wherever a forlorn hope required a leader, it found one in Jonathan his son. In the fine *kínah* or lamentation pronounced over them at the last we read:—

“From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.”

Naturally we have no consecutive or scientific account of Saul's great war, but we have the story of one long summer's day, full of antique thought

and life. Rich in detail and word-pictures, it is our earliest authentic portrait of ancient life among the free peoples. At dawn Jonathan and his armour-bearer surprise a Philistine garrison. The watchmen report the disturbance to Saul, who immediately consults the priest of Shiloh, present with his ephod in the camp. In the very act of divination Saul sees that the moment for decisive action has come. "Withdraw thy hand," he calls to the priest, and rushes with his men into the fray. When the Philistines begin to retreat, their Hebrew camp-followers change sides; the men lurking in concealment show themselves, and soon the retreat becomes a rout. "So Yahweh saved Israel." Saul, in the eagerness of pursuit, curses the man who tastes food till evening. At sunset the famished warriors proceed to devour the captured sheep, eating with the blood. Saul causes a great stone to be rolled up, and every man has to bring his animal and slay it at this improvised altar. When Saul consults Yahweh about a night-attack on the retreating force, no answer is returned. The sacred lot is cast, and Jonathan is pronounced to be the cause of Yahweh's anger. He admits having ignorantly broken Saul's oath by eating honey, and his father sentences him to death. The warriors, however, intervene, and Jonathan is delivered.

As a picture of ancient life this is in some ways superior to anything in Homer, since it is evidently

the composition of a man whose standpoint was identical with that of the warriors whose action he relates. We cannot put our finger on a single detail and say that it is the thought of a later period.

Saul's wars were successful not only against the Philistines, and the Hebrew races east of Jordan, but against the Syrians of Zobah, and the old enemy Amalek.

In his latter days especially, Saul suffered from intense attacks of melancholia—"an evil spirit from Yahweh"—caused by and causing bitter jealousy of his son-in-law David. Two massacres of priestly persons are stated to have been carried out by him in Benjamin, one of priests from Shiloh who had settled at Nob, and the other of Canaanite temple servants at Gibeon. One would be glad to believe that these were the inventions of a later age, but they are too full of antique touches to be romances. Doeg, the muleteer, "detained before Yahweh"; the sword kept as a trophy at Nob, wrapped up in a cloth behind the ephod; Rizpah scaring away the vultures from her dead,—these are certainly not later imaginations. Yet it must remain a mystery why Benjamin and Ephraim submitted quietly to the slaughter of the priests—a crime so atrocious that even the body-guard of runners refused to carry out the King's orders.

Saul met his death bravely on Mount Gilboa,

fighting against the Philistines who had once more overrun the country. The story of his visit to the Witch of Endor is a magnificent and sombre piece of writing, which belongs, however, rather to literature than to history.

No sufficient data exist for forming a decisive judgment on Saul's character. He exists for us simply in a series of pictures, some historical, some quite legendary. Brave, simple, kindly, patriotic, but with a touch of insanity darkening his life, such is the impression he produces. When to this we add the difficulty of his position—the absolute authority of a permanent dictator, suddenly thrust over the heads of nobles, priests, elders, and minor dignitaries of all sorts—we can in part understand how the belief arose that the “Chosen of Yahweh” was in his latter years permanently alienated from the national god.

The value of Saul's reign politically was that doing the thing for the first time he appears to have convinced all men that the kingship was a necessity. We do not hear of any attempts to revert to the system of government by the tribal nobles which had existed before his time. The League has now become a nation—a unit in time of peace as well as in war.

The theological value of the kingship was enormous. Hitherto Yahweh had stood for two badly-connected ideas, viz. the war-god of the League,

and the baal of the little hamlet. These two ideas were now absorbed in the larger one of the protector of the whole nation. The particularism of the shrines was, of course, never entirely overcome so long as they existed. But if, as most are agreed, the time of King David was one in which religion became more spiritual, that happy result is to be traced largely to the political situation which led men to nobler ideas of the god they worshipped. Not, of course, that the mere extension of territory can affect our ideas of God, but the genuine recognition that he is the god of many men, and "helps" them all in spite of their often divided interests, is a notable step. To put it at its very lowest: when two neighbouring villages learn to worship the same deity, it is obvious that he will not help either of them to steal the cattle of the other.

There is a curious obscurity hanging round the question whether Judah formed part of Saul's kingdom or not. We have no direct information on the subject, indeed it almost seems as if the silence were intentional. A considerable amount of indirect evidence exists, and, after weighing it all, the conclusion appears to be that Judah was not part of "Israel," though *possibly* a tributary state. The voluntary fusion came later. Of course if Saul defeated the Amalekites in the Negeb, it would be strong reason to believe that Judah was part of his dominions. The section which describes the cam-

paign is, however, a very late one, and the oldest account says that Saul "*smote the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.*" This certainly suggests that (as in the days of Gideon) the Amalekites were the aggressors, and that Saul found them much nearer home than the Negeb.

The connection between the campaign against Amalek and Saul's rejection by Yahweh can hardly be historical, yet the rejection was almost certainly believed in during Saul's life-time. It is to this cause that we may trace the fact that the monarchy was never during its history regarded as "divine" in any absolute sense. The interests of Yahweh and his Anointed were never identified. Although there was apparently a complete absence of constitutional restraint on the king, yet he does not strike us as an object of slavish terror, as one who wields supernatural thunderbolts. The Hebrew king is constantly liable to be rebuked by prophets "speaking in the word of Yahweh," and his tenure of office is always regarded as conditional on his retaining the favour of the national god.

CHAPTER VIII

DAVID AND SOLOMON

THE battle of Mount Gilboa left Israel at the mercy of the Philistines. Saul and three of his sons had perished, and there was no course open to Ishbaal, who inherited the kingdom, but to retire across Jordan to the old village and shrine of Mahanaim (Double Camp). Yet this retirement, which was carried out by Abner, the late king's cousin and general, is proof that Israel did not become a tributary state of Philistia. There is no need to suppose that Abner immediately and vigorously renewed the war. No doubt both sides were glad of rest, and the Philistines were left in possession of most of the Western country; but had Ishbaal accepted the position of tributary prince there would have been no obstacle to his return to Benjamin.

The troubled and unhappy years which followed were brought to a close by the assassination of Abner, closely followed by that of Ishbaal. The nobles then took the brave and startling step of offering the throne to David, Prince of Judah.

David, though himself a Judahite, had been one of Saul's heroes in the great days of the War of Independence. His friendship with Jonathan, the king's son, has become proverbial, and he was rewarded by a marriage with Michal, Saul's daughter. Saul's jealousy was aroused by a stupid song, harmless perhaps in intention, of which the refrain was—

“Saul has slain his thousands
And David his tens of thousands.”

From that time Saul's mind was poisoned by his inability to decide whether David were really his best friend or his worst enemy.

David became a fugitive, and collected round him a band of broken men and bankrupts. He was forced at last to throw in his lot with the Philistines, and was rewarded, first with the town of Ziklag, and then with the principality of Judah, which he governed from Hebron, as a tributary of Philistia.

It is a further proof that the Northern kingdom was not tributary, to find that David's acceptance of the kingship of Israel was understood by the Philistines as an announcement of revolt.

The early history of Judah is obscure. As has been said, the most definite statement that can be made with certainty is that it was closely parallel to the history of Israel. The Judahites were nomads of the Hebrew stock, and they settled in Southern Palestine after conflict with the local

Canaanites. That they formed part of the desert-league is negatived by the reluctance of the old writers at any stage of the history to apply to them the name of the League—Israel.

Their great hero was Abraham, who is very possibly a historical character, though we cannot be so certain of his existence as we can be of the historical reality of Moses, since he belongs to a remoter past and has been more idealised by the tradition. The great shrine of Beersheba, in the extreme South, was connected with the name of another hero, Isaac.

That Abraham was the ancient god of Judah is extremely unlikely. His shade may (or may not) have been propitiated at Machpelah, but when all has been said in favour of ancestor-worship, there still appears to be a *mega chasma* between the living tribal god and the dead tribal hero.

Whether God was worshipped in ancient Judah under the name Yahweh is a question of interest only to students of antiquities. It is perfectly certain that if Judah and Israel revered the same divine name, yet so long as they were politically separate not one but two divine "helpers" were understood. There are indications that Dôd (or David) was the name of the god of the South; but the moment the political fusion was complete, Yahweh was worshipped from the shrine of Dan to that of Beersheba.

The combined genealogical tree is probably the work of the pundits of Israel and Judah under King David, and exhibits great ingenuity in settling the rival claims. It was inevitable that Israel must remain the father of the tribes, and tradition was too strong for the genealogists to invent a third wife for him. Judah and Simeon are therefore assigned to Leah, but their birth is stated to have taken place before that of Rachel's children. On the other hand, this would have given the birthright too definitely to the South, and therefore Reuben was placed at the head of all—a tribe too feeble to assert a position against Ephraim, Benjamin, or Judah. A place was found for Abraham and Isaac as grandfather and father of Israel. Caleb and Jerahmeel became descendants of Judah; and Levi, now claiming a genealogical position, was enrolled as Judah's brother.

King David's first exploit after his accession to the throne of Israel was in many ways his greatest contribution to the world's history—the capture of Jerusalem, a fortified town situated on the Ophel or Southern spur of what was afterwards the Temple hill. During the long centuries of race-fusion Jerusalem had stubbornly resisted, and had remained a centre of antique Canaanite tradition. No doubt even at the last there was a melek of the old sort reigning there, but as we cannot accept the clever theory that he was none other than Araunah, his name has perished. The name of the local god

apparently was Zedek ("righteousness"), which affords Isaiah and Jeremiah an opportunity for that solemn playing on words which to us has become impossible.

Some critics are disposed to assign the great exploit to the days of David's rule in Hebron, but this lacks probability. What conceivable motive could a Philistine tributary have in attacking an isolated fortress outside his principality? When, however, it forms a frowning obstacle between his old and his new territories, we can clearly see that his first object is to effect a junction.

As it lay just on the border between Judah and Benjamin, the king wisely determined to make it his capital—in such sense as was then possible—and owing to this selection it became in time the focus of the world's spiritual development. The old "Urusalim" of Abdkhiba becomes gradually identified with the noblest aspirations of humanity, and even to our own time supplies a name for that ideal which can never be realised under our present conditions. It is of course a grievous error to imagine that the associations which the word Jerusalem conveys to us were in any sense present to the mind of David's contemporaries. No more than in the case of Rome, Athens, Tyre, or any other city, could the end be foreseen from the beginning.

Accurate dates for this period are not possible, but the capture of Jerusalem took place in the latter half of the eleventh century B.C.

The connection of both Judah and Benjamin with Jerusalem is of the utmost importance. The alliance between Judah and Israel was of a transitory nature, but Jerusalem was a *tertium quid*. As a Benjamite town it inherited the tradition of the North, and as a Judahite town it retained its independence long after Israel had disappeared from history. In this way Judah became the heir of Israel, and in fact *is* Israel for all later ages.

King David is of importance more as the ideal ruler than as an "antique king in a barbarous age." With Adam the first man, Abraham the father of the faithful, Moses the lawgiver, he has become a *type*, invested with virtues alien to his own time and place in history. Such "types" are of the utmost consequence in the history of ideas, and they afford the greatest assistance in seeking to grasp the thought of the age which formed them. The righteous king reigning by divine favour in the Holy City has become one of the thoughts of the whole world. We can all call up the picture of this "stained-glass-window" Saint, crown on head and harp in hand, leading his people in praising God Almighty.

It says much for David that he appears to have been not wholly unworthy of his position as nucleus of this circle of legends and attributes.

Brave, not ungenerous, recalled by his people from exile, there must have been kingly qualities

in the man, though any attempt to justify him on modern, or indeed any other, principles must fail. Ferocity in war and lust in private life form an unlovely picture, yet we can hardly acquit him of either. There is little doubt that the whole tone of warfare became darker after his horrible slaughter of the Moabites. The Ammonites are the hooligans of the old story, but their revenge consisted in shaving off half an old man's beard, or putting out one of his eyes; David's measured massacre was a novelty. Much, of course, lay in the altered circumstances of the time. As civilisation and the arts of peace increase, war becomes more and more a violation of ordinary conditions, and therefore, in the first instance, more and more brutal. David lived just at the moment when war was beginning to be *abnormal*, and he expressed the fact in the crudest fashion.

David's harem was not perhaps a novelty. Some of the old "judges" are said to have had large collections of women. The monogamic principle had not yet been announced. But the murder of Uriah lies as an indelible stain on his character, and the harem was undoubtedly both in David's reign and afterwards the feature of the monarchy which produced the largest amount of confusion, instability, and bloodshed.

Much, of course, may be explained by David's position. Saul had naturally conceived himself to

be the military head of the League ; David recognises his own permanent and social position ; “ every desirable thing ” is for him, and he takes it. We ought rather to be surprised that through it all he retained the affection of his people.

David was succeeded by Solomon his son. Under him the older form of monarchy, which we describe as Mycenaean or Salomonic, culminated, and we must therefore examine carefully this stage in the evolution of the free peoples.

Solomon's reign was one of peace. David had put the fear of Judah-Israel on all the nations round. The exact limits of the kingdom are of no great importance. All the other Hebrew races, and some of the Syrian and Philistine towns, were tributary, and the Canaanites of the north (Phœnicians) were allies. That Solomon's dominion actually extended “ from Tiphseh to Gaza ” cannot be proved. The statement is probably one of those free dashes of colour which later hands have added to the picture throughout, without altogether obscuring the historical outlines.

For the first time we meet with a public revenue, which of course passed into the king's privy purse. Saul had probably nothing but his private estate and his share of the spoil ; Solomon had a constant income from public sources. It was derived mainly from the tribute of the conquered nations and from the tolls of the great trade-route between Asia and Africa

which passed through his dominions. Besides these he was himself a trader and shipowner, and he exacted forced labour from his people.

His dominions and his wealth made him a powerful king. He formed an alliance with Egypt, apparently on equal terms, and married Pharaoh's daughter.

It is this picture which has dazzled the eyes of historians. Judah-Israel here appears as an antique empire side by side with Egypt. Here we seem to see the people for a moment realising their political ideal. It was their weakness which made their empire vanish while Egypt and Assyria endured.

But in truth the transitoriness of the Salomonic kingdom is no sign of national weakness. It is simply an indication that the people were working for something nobler and better. For a moment Judah-Israel approximates to the condition of the River-empires, but it is only for a moment—only a phase in their development. The very attempt to organise and perpetuate it led to its dissolution.

The old hard struggle with neighbouring tribes, with the elements and the unfertile soil, was passing rapidly away. Peace, and the arts of peace, had come, and man was at length entering on the heritage which we understand by civilised life. There was money to purchase the luxuries of the older empires. It was apparently inevitable that this new life should in the first instance be

centralised: that what was being won for *man*, should for the moment be squandered on *a* man. It was inevitable just because this advance had been possible only by the concentration of power in the hands of one, and concentration of power meant concentration of wealth.

But it was only a transitory stage, as we shall see in the next chapter. To gain the "better life" men had combined under one, but they immediately discovered that they were defrauded of their aim; for what had been gained *by* one was held *for* one.

While it lasted it was glorious—from the point of view of the Court. Solomon reigned in grandeur; the people still lived in huts.

We know little of the civil organisation of the kingdom except that it was centralised and strong. The king was himself the Chief Justice. Under both David and Solomon we have an interesting list of the chief officers of the kingdom whom we are not to regard as at first or by intention forming a *council*, but simply as heads of departments. In spite of strong opposition David instituted a Census of which we should like to know more. War and taxation suggest themselves as probable causes for his action, but perhaps there was something deeper, and it was aimed at the old clan system. The reckoning of the people by "thousands" instead of by "kins" may date from this epoch.

The nobles of the tribes sink for the time into

political insignificance. There was little place for them under the "bureaucracy." Yet we must think of them as continuing to hold their status in their own neighbourhoods. The history tells us little of them, yet one really admirable picture exists, that of octogenarian Barzillai of Gilead, a man of princely hospitality and dignified independence. It is worth quoting at length.

King David has been driven into exile across Jordan, owing to a palace conspiracy organised by his son Absalom. "*Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim (together with other nobles) brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David and for the people that were with him, to eat ; for they said, The people is hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.*" The revolution is suppressed and the king invited to return. "*And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim ; and he went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old ; and he had provided the king with sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim ; for he was a very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will sustain thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the*

king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old: can I discern between good and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant would but just go over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham: let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good to thee. And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good to thee; and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee. And all the people went over Jordan, and the king went over; and the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place. So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went over with him."

Altogether a delightful picture. There must have been many of these fine old country gentlemen, princes in their own districts. It is pleasant to let the imagination wander from the kings with their intrigues, their body-guards, their harems, to these nobles of Israel living in simple ancestral state. They were eclipsed for the moment, but their time would come again.

Let the reader note two points in special. In the country houses there was at this time abundance of good living, but luxuries were found only at the royal court. And Chimham goes up to Jerusalem. There we have the first notice of a tendency which was to be all powerful in founding the city-state.

King Solomon had a noble passion for architecture, and built himself a palace in Jerusalem. Attached to this was a Chapel Royal, designed to serve also as the *bamah* for the city. This was that famous Temple which has played so large a rôle in the religious thought of the world. It was, of course, an amplified form of the primitive shrine already described. The sacred enclosure contained a "house," around which were grouped chambers for priests, prophets, temple-servants, etc. In the court was a "brazen sea," a vast brass tank for ablutions. There were two great brass pillars, called Jachin and Boaz, before which stood the altar. On extraordinary occasions this latter was too small, and the centre of the court was used for burning the sacred portions. Not only Jachin and Boaz, but the Ark of God as well, represented Yahweh. After long neglect it had been "discovered" by David, and Solomon placed it in the inmost recess of the House. We are not to suppose that these were the only *σεβάσματα*. David's purpose, when he "took away" the gods of the Philistines can hardly be doubtful. Moreover we read of a brass serpent,

attributed to Moses; also of oxen, lions and cherubim, which later writers regard as having been simply decorative. When "idolatry" had passed from a virtue to a vice, Israel was naturally anxious to hide the customs of their ancestors.

Nothing is said about kodesh prostitution, but we can hardly doubt that it found a place in the Temple during Solomon's reign. Certainly it did so a few years later.

The Jerusalem temple had, in its origin, no exclusive significance or position. It was simply one more of the countless high-places. What prestige it enjoyed was entirely owing to the fact that it was the bamah of the royal city. It has come to occupy a unique place in the religious thought of the world, but that is the result, not the cause, of its unique history.

Solomon also built shrines for the foreign princesses of his establishment, somewhat after the fashion of "Ambassadors' Chapels." These were simply the usual religious counterparts of his alliances and marriages, and had no special significance at the time. They are interesting mainly as showing that the ladies in question did not change their kinship on their marriage. They were still Egyptians, Moabites, or Ammonites worshipping the gods of their fathers.

CHAPTER IX

JEROBOAM BEN NEBAT AND THE PROPHETS

AFTER the death of Solomon the temporary union between Israel and Judah was dissolved.

The underlying reason for the separation has already been indicated. The free people found that they had imposed a master on themselves and they sought to remedy their mistake ; they saw "every desirable thing" in Israel passing into the hands of *one*, and they resented it.

Naturally the question expressed itself in terms of inter-tribal jealousy. Ephraim imagined that the crux lay in the fact of the king being a Judahite, and that all would be right if he were chosen from a northern tribe. This was of course a misunderstanding, for the grievance lay deeper ; but none the less the separation which resulted was a distinct step in the right direction, for only in comparatively small sovereign states was it possible for antiquity to reach constitutionalism.

Judah and the South, together with the Southern

part of Benjamin, remained under the rule of the House of David, while Ephraim and the North elected Jeroboam ben Nebat.

The united Salomonic kingdom had done its work and had left a rich inheritance for posterity, which in the practical sphere was mainly the welding of Judah and Benjamin in the city of Jerusalem ; while in the sphere of ideas we have (*a*) the essential unity of Israel-Judah ; (*b*) the great king reigning in Jerusalem ; (*c*) Yahweh as the god of kingdoms now hostile ; and (*d*) Yahweh as the keeper of the king's conscience. All these were to prove fruitful in the coming time.

The separation of the North had been actively supported by the Prophets, who had indeed selected the successful leader of revolt. Yet their aim was hardly identical with that of the people as a whole ; and as they now for the first time exhibit distinct political activity, it may be well to inquire what were the motives which throughout their history animated these "men of God" in the region of social and political life.

The prophets formed a definite *Order* in ancient Israel. That there was a noviciate appears from the fact that the phrase "Sons of the Prophets"—*i.e.* men trained by prophets—is synonymous with the word "prophets" itself. At the ceremony of initiation they were made permanently *kodesh* to Yahweh by a rite which apparently included some kind of

tattooing on the face ; at least one could tell that a man belonged to the Order by looking at his forehead, and Zechariah has an obscure allusion to wounds "between the hands."

As we have already seen, their earliest functions were in connection with war, viz. to announce whether any given occasion was auspicious for going out to battle, to stir up the spirit of the warriors by song and dance, and to foretell dangers. They had no kodesh dice like the priest, and Yahweh revealed his will to his spokesman either in dreams during natural sleep, or by the "burden" which he laid on the prophet's spirit during a self-induced hypnotic trance. The aid of music was often required to bring about this condition.

Plato observes in the *Timaeus* : " God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom but to the foolishness of man ; for no man when in his wits attains prophetic truth and inspiration, but when he receives the inspired word either his intelligence is enthralled by sleep or he is demented by some distemper or possession."

In the course of time the trance became of less importance. There is little in "Malachi," for instance, that suggests circumstances out of the way of the ordinary preacher ; but in all the great writing-prophets from Hosea to Ezekiel we can be sure that the trance still held an important place in their life and work.

To the primitive prophets Yahweh was a god of war, and Israel an armed camp in constant readiness for battle. Hence from the first the settled life in Canaan was distasteful to them. The ideas which animated them—desert Yahwism of the most pronounced type—were wholly at variance with the comparatively peaceful Baals of Canaan and the agricultural life which they symbolised. In their own lives they preserved as far as possible the habits of the wilderness. They disliked not only the cultivation of fields and vineyards, but the building of houses and the wearing of civilised dress. They lived in huts or booths, and wore the old-fashioned skin mantle, for which they claimed a divine origin. It is this intense conservatism which marks them throughout the story ; they were the ultra-tories, the reactionaries of Israel, and every change (good, bad, or indifferent) in customs and beliefs met with their strenuous opposition.

As the resources of civilisation developed they opposed all advance—silks, sweet ointments, ivory, costly furniture, elaborate costumes, noble buildings, horses, ships, all fall under the condemnation of the prophets. Nothing taught them the value of civilised life but the complete loss of it at the destruction of Jerusalem ; after which they laboured first in theory and then in practice to rebuild the shattered edifice.

It must constantly be borne in mind that pro-

phesy in Israel is a unity, but an unconsciously developing unity. It may seem a difficult matter to connect Deborah rejoicing over the blood-stained corpse of Sisera with the unknown author of the sublime prophecy beginning, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God"; but we can trace the history with a fair amount of precision by careful attention to the development of the social and political environment. There is no doubt a great amount of individuality about the leading prophets, but each uses the work of his predecessors and builds on it without any clear recognition that the structure is altering. Individual liberty appears to have been cultivated in the Order so far as manner of life went. The prophets might be married or unmarried, live singly or in community, at a shrine or elsewhere. Indeed, as the whole theory of the Order was direct inspiration, we naturally find studied eccentricity modified by the gregarious instincts of a definite Order. This eccentricity, however, was never intended to introduce novelties, but to enforce conservative opinions.

We have mentioned "Yahweh as the keeper of the king's conscience" as being one of the great ideas produced by the monarchy. It will illustrate the way in which *ethico-theological advance was not self-evolved but forced on by political circumstances*. In primitive Israel there was no such idea as "sin"—you wronged *a person*, or still more accurately,

you defrauded him. Theft, murder, adultery, false-witness, were not wrong in themselves; they were wrong because by them a clansman was defrauded. Towards an alien they were perfectly natural, if not meritorious. We have already mentioned this aspect of morals in speaking of kodesh prostitution. The girl belonged to the temple, she was there for the purpose, no one was wronged. When a man was defrauded, he went to a judge and laid his case before him. If he got judgment in his favour, all it was worth was an expert opinion that he was in the right, righteous, *saddik*. The judge had no means of enforcing his own decisions. Public opinion played the part of police, and hence all wrongs were met by a money fine, unless the injured man was strong enough to enforce the *lex talionis* himself. There was a multiplicity of judges, and a man might go to whom he pleased. But with the monarchy the king had inevitably become Chief Justice, and in his court were heard all manner of cases both of first instance and of appeal. Further, it was obviously derogatory to his dignity that his decisions should remain mere dead letters, and therefore he began to carry them out by means of his body-guard.

A new state of affairs arises when a man finds himself wronged by the king. What is his remedy? The case arose in the reign of Saul, when he slew the Gibeonites. There was no remedy. But after his death there was a famine for three years, and

when David, somewhat tardily, sought the face of Yahweh he received this torah :—

“ For Saul and for his house of blood
Because he slew the Gibeonites.”

The Gibeonites refused to accept money-compensation, and David allowed them to hang Saul's seven sons as a sacrifice to Yahweh. From which was established the principle, excellent alike in morals and politics, that Yahweh who abhors “ uncovered ” blood, makes no exception even when it is shed by the king.

David's relation to his subjects was even more autocratic than Saul's, and accordingly when he first seduced Uriah's wife and then murdered the man himself, important questions arose. Obviously something was wrong, but who had been defrauded? The usual answer would be, first Uriah and then Uriah's kin ; but there were two difficulties in the way. The first was theoretical : Had any man rights as against the king either in his wife or in his kinsman? The second difficulty was practical : How can the king give judgment against himself, or hand himself over to Uriah's kin to be put to death? To say that the king wrongs his subject, obviously leads to nugatory results. But then *whom* has the king wronged? The prophet Nathan forces David himself to admit “ I have wronged Yahweh.” The idea of wronging Yahweh was no new one. We have seen

Saul's warriors wronging him by eating with the blood. It is the intrusion of the idea into the sphere of morals that requires explanation. We need not regard it simply as the prophet's last resort in seeking an answer to the question, Who is wronged? Rather it suggests that while the king is out of legal relationship to any individual subject, he stands in closest contact with his people as a whole. The stupration of Bathsheba is not a wrong against Uriah, but it is something more—it is a wrong against Israel, against Israel personified, against Israel's god, against Yahweh. David's repentance secured his own safety, but blood must cover blood, and Bathsheba's child died.

The splendour of the Salomonic monarchy was necessarily distasteful to the prophets. If the farmhouse were anathema, how much more the royal palace. Shemaiah and Ahijah of Shiloh are the two great names of this period, and we must see in their nomination and support of Jeroboam not so much dislike of the shrines of other gods—distasteful though they may well have been to Yahweh's devotees—as detestation of the gorgeous extravagance of the Court and Temple. On the part of the prophets the desire was not to share the royal delights but to destroy them.

The break-up of Solomon's "empire" meant the return to the system of border warfare. The statement that there was "*war between Jeroboam and*

Rehoboam all their days" may only imply that the unusual peace had come to an end, and that the ordinary relations between sovereign independent states were resumed. The fact that Jeroboam "*went out from Shechem and built Penuel*" does not necessarily mean that he was forced to retire across Jordan. In any case the retirement can only have been temporary, for he was able to make important changes in the cultus and to increase the prestige of the old shrine at Bethel, a few miles north of Jerusalem.

Like David, though in an opposite sense, Jeroboam ben Nebat has become a "type"—he is for all time the king who makes his people to sin. His revolt, indeed, is rarely cast up against him, since it had the sanction of the prophets and was undoubtedly "from Yahweh." Yet none the less he is the head and front of the offending which led ultimately to the destruction of Samaria centuries later. It is curious to see the efforts which certain divines make to continue to believe in the exceeding sinfulness of Jeroboam, although they definitely abandon every ground of accusation on which he is condemned in Scripture. Of the man himself we have really no information on which to found a judgment. We may conjecture him to have been a successful adventurer of the ordinary pattern, but it is only a conjecture. The fact that he reigned for twenty-two years and died in his bed is a strong point in his favour.

He is definitely condemned on the old pre-ethical ground of cultus: he sacrificed at the wrong altar, at the wrong time, with the wrong ministers. All this condemnation, of course, is based on nonconformity to a form of cultus which prevailed centuries later; so far as he innovated at all, his actions were covered by his royal priesthood. Nor was his action in placing "golden calves" at Bethel and Dan a matter of any significance in his own day, for we know that the Dan sanctuary, at least, was already well supplied with *sebasmata*, and there is every probability that the same was the case at Bethel.

The plain explanation is that the writer of the Book of Kings, seeing a divine judgment in the destruction of Samaria, finds the reason for the anger of Yahweh in a faulty system of worship, and is constrained by its undeniable continuity to carry the sin back to the first king of the Northern nation.

The separation of Israel and Judah robbed the monarchy of its splendour, but made in *theory* no difference. Yet the change was a very real one. Forced labour became an exceptional expedient; wealth spread to a comparatively wide circle; the kingly office, though still without constitutional restraint, was by no means what it had been, and appeared even less than it was when contrasted with the Salomonic empire, which began immediately to assume legendary glory.

Yet the net result can hardly have been satis-

factory to the prophets. It would of course be absurd to describe Ahijah and Shemaiah as anarchists, since not government but luxury was the object of their dislike ; yet it may well be questioned whether Israel ruled by Jeroboam and worshipping at Bethel was more pleasing to them than the united monarchy.

CHAPTER X

ISRAEL AND JUDAH TO THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD

THE most notable feature about the development of the Mediterranean states is its extreme rapidity. In two or three centuries we pass from somewhat uninteresting clansmen, some of whose customs are barely distinguishable from those of savages, to citizens whose thoughts are the permanent heritage of the race.

During the two hundred years which followed the disruption of Solomon's kingdom, Israel and Judah appear to have made progress on closely similar lines, but our knowledge of the Northern kingdom is somewhat fuller than that of the Southern.

Judah, indeed, had the start, for there the capital and the royal dynasty were already definitely chosen and remained to the end, while in Israel both of these were still to seek. On the other hand, Judah was more remote from the world's influence. With the exception of the Philistines she was surrounded

by tribes less advanced than herself, and the great trade route which united Asia and Africa, and carried a constant store of novelties material and intellectual, only skirted her border, while it passed through the centre of the sister country.

We have, unfortunately, no great amount of direct information as to the political and social movements of the time, but what we have bears out the conclusions that can be drawn from a comparison of the more fully described periods which come before and after. The changes, moreover, are not isolated phenomena, but parts of an organic whole.

The constitution is still that of an absolute monarchy, the only restraints on the king's freedom of action being the conservative traditions of the State. In the last resort the only remedy was assassination. In Judah this political expedient was handled more skilfully than in Israel, for in the South the son of the murdered king succeeded him, while in the North the assassin seized the throne.

The second person in the realm was not the queen, but the *Gebirah* or King's Mother. This is obviously a "survival"; but at the same time it was an excellent working institution, as in the event of a minority it provided a Regent whose interests were naturally bound up in the young king. Athaliah's usurpation was the result of exceptional conditions.

The *Royal Family*, called in Hebrew the "sons of the king" or the "seed of the kingdom," have

little political importance except in the event of the king becoming incapacitated. Otherwise they figure only as possible successors or pretenders. Confusion is introduced in the English version by the use of the word "princes" for the *nobles*, or old hereditary chiefs of the clans, who had, of course, no connection with the Royal house.

The ministers of state already mentioned under David and Solomon are called the *King's Servants*. They were frequently foreigners, and included the king's priest, the head of the body-guard, the scribe, the recorder, and other officials.

The great mass of freemen are distinguished as *the inhabitants of Jerusalem* (or of *Samaria*) and *the people of the land*, i.e. country folk, though this latter phrase does not always appear to be used consistently.

The *slaves* formed an increasing section of the population, and were both of Hebrew and foreign extraction.

Throughout the period we can see a gradual weakening of the king's power. On the one hand, the king's Servants cease to be simply separate heads of departments, and form a bureau which seeks to be the power behind the throne. Thus the usurpation of Athaliah is brought to an end by Jehoiada the priest, who places the seven-year-old Joash on the throne. We are significantly told that "*Joash did right in the sight of Yahweh all*

his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him."

It requires no great imagination to fill in the *lacuna* in the history between these words and the following :
" *His Servants arose and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo.*"

Somewhat later in time we find also increasing importance attached to the *Nobles*. This was necessarily bound up with the growth of the great towns. So long as the nobles were scattered about the country they were petty kings in their own districts, but practically powerless as regards the national policy. When Omri founded Samaria he was working for ends which he cannot have foreseen. Jerusalem and Samaria grew steadily in importance year by year, and the nobles gradually drifted towards them. We saw the beginning of the movement when Chimham went to Jerusalem ; in the days of Hosea the nobles formed an important element in the city life.

In the case of a disputed succession, recourse was had to obtaining the sanction of the upper classes by "cutting a berith," *i.e.* making a covenant. Agreements were ratified by the contracting parties passing between the halves of a divided beast. Hence when the nobles agreed to accept Joash as king they passed between pieces of a sacrificed calf.

This growth of the towns was an indication of the increasing prosperity of the country, and with prosperity came luxury. It was no longer confined

to one, but had spread to a relatively large class. Of course the great mass even of the freemen had no considerable share in it. Indeed their life became even less tolerable because of the ever-growing contrast between wealth and poverty.

Luxurious living was happily only one of the gifts of material prosperity. Less doubtful results are to be found in the growth of education and in increased kindness of life.

The date at which *some* Hebrews could write may be placed as far back as Assyriologists or Egyptologists think right; the age of David was certainly not a literary age as a whole. It is obvious that general literature implies a large leisured class; men do not write unless they have either a patron or a public, and the early patron was mainly interested in the annalist of his own doings. Israel was now reaching the stage at which a leisured and therefore cultured class was possible, and the inherent genius of the people took advantage of it.

The greater kindness of life is explicable on the same principle. The peasant can only escape brutality by careful education in ideas and ideals derived from a higher and more cultured class. He cannot evolve for himself the courtesies of life. It was the growth of an upper class—not only of warlords but of well-to-do priests and merchants—that rendered possible the *mansuetudo* reflected in the pages of the great prophets.

The deepest movement of the age, closely united with all the others, was the growth of *individualism*, the sense of the value of personality. In primitive life the further back we go the more we find the individual absolutely lost in the life of the clan; indeed his whole value and place in the world arise from the fact that he is a *member*, a part of a greater whole. Isolated he is a pariah, an outcast, reduced literally to the level of a beast of prey. One great value of the Salomonic monarchy lay in the fact that it enabled one man to express his individuality. The River-empires practically never got beyond that. With them it was literally *aut Caesar aut nullus*. What man of ordinary education to-day can give you the name of a single Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian who did not occupy the throne? It was the glory of the Mediterranean states to assert and express the individuality of every free man.

This growing individualism expressed itself in a notable torah of Yahweh put forth in this period:—

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,
Nor the children be put to death for the fathers;
But every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”

This marks a very definite stage in the history of civilisation.

At the same time the practice of human sacrifice began to fall into disrepute. In primitive times this rite had meant that the clan was sacrificing part of itself, but now that the value of individual life was

coming to the front, men began to see that the individual and not the clan was really paying the penalty.

In the sphere of religious ethics the conception of individuality in relation to Yahweh produces the idea of *sin*; but this was a late development. For the most part Yahweh still concerned himself with the nation as a whole, and the only person in individual relationship to him was the king. In Elijah's rebuke of Ahab for the murder of Naboth we have simply a reassertion of the principle of Nathan's rebuke of David for a similar offence.

The character of Yahweh inevitably underwent some alteration. However conservative a force religion may be, it must yield in time to the growth of thought and custom outside itself. The old materialism of the blood-kinship between God and man tended to give way to more exalted conceptions. As man learned through the growing civilisation that he did not live by bread alone, so his idea of his god as drinking the smoking blood and snuffing up the rich smell of roasting fat inevitably fell into the background; and the Salomonic monarchy supplied him with the picture of Yahweh as the Great King holding his court in the heavenly palace. The common people still thought of Yahweh as having the figure of a young bull, but the more cultured evidently regarded his form as human. When Micaiah ben Imlah says, "*I saw Yahweh sitting on*

his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him," it is plain that the *substratum* is Solomon and not the Golden Calf. Yet at the same interview the prophet Zedekiah appeals to popular sentiment by presenting the king with Yahweh's iron horns.

The greatest triumphs of *mores* were won in the sphere of sex relationship. The grosser form of kodesh prostitution was expelled from the shrines, and the profession of harlot ceased to be respectable. Womanhood won its first victory in the recognition of the true ideal of sex union—the one man and the one woman. The spiritual aspect of love takes its place side by side with the physical.

This change is reflected in the Divine Marriage. Yahweh's relation to Israel, his bride, is not simply as the begetter of her offspring, but as her lover and friend.

"The Eternal God is thy refuge,
And underneath are the everlasting arms."

Our knowledge of this new and better form of religion is derived from the pre-exilic writings—history and poetry—and from Amos and Hosea, for whom it forms at the same time the underlying basis and one great object of attack. Although this religion had to a certain extent lost the crudeness of mere naturalism, it was still intensely patriotic: Yahweh and Israel were the high contracting parties of a great alliance, and each was necessary to the other. But except in time of war, patriotism is not a striking

quality of the poorer classes; it is the men who order the State that are interested in the State. Hence we find something of a rift in the religious unity of the nation. There is a certain haughtiness about the attitude of mind which regards the state-god as the only object worthy of worship. The common people had been in the habit of worshipping gods of all sorts; and probably in ordinary peasant life there was more vitality and comfort in the worship of some local "demon" of tree or spring, in the cult of the teraphim, even in consulting an *ôb*, than in the worship of the deity who presided over the affairs of the nation. Yet in the North, at least, Yahwism was victorious, and all cultus appears to have been brought into nominal connection with the national god. Probably the Syrian Wars had much to do with this. "*He who sacrifices to a god shall be made cherem, except to Yahweh alone.*" So stands the oldest law on this subject, probably promulgated by Joram of Israel. *Cherem* is the term for destruction in honour of a deity.

In Judah the triumph was less complete. Only in Benjamite Jerusalem did the worship of Yahweh take the same place as in Israel.

The great shrines became in time exceeding magnificent. The ritual had been elaborated and the buildings adorned with splendid votive offerings. They formed, in fact, public treasure-houses which supplied the material for forming alliances or pur-

chasing relief in time of disaster. The Temple at Jerusalem was very slow in acquiring popularity ; it was too new. The sanctuaries whose origin was lost in legend and obscurity—Bethel, Gilgal, Dan, Beer-sheba—were the favourite places of pilgrimage.

The influence of the temples was very great. To man in early days the great benefit of cultus is that it establishes normal relations between himself and the unseen powers. *Elohim* (God—a vague plural) is the rather erratic Way of Things. Normally Elohim produces fertility and concord. But at times things go wrong. The crops fail, or an “evil wind from Elohim” sows dissension in the clan. Hence primitive man has a haunting fear combined with his trust in God, because he never knows when the unseen will be offended. It is therefore an enormous step to have these matters regulated properly—to have the cultus both normal and abnormal clearly laid down. Man is then set free from his terrors, and is able to go about his great work of subduing the earth.

The shrines also built up the *solidarity* of Israel. In their splendour the poor man found a refuge from the squalor of his life ; all classes were united at the great festivals ; and the unity of the people was visibly set forth to all.

The relation of the prophets to the newer Yahwism may be inferred with some certainty. So far as it was national and patriotic they were with it heart and soul, for Israel-Yahweh were still two sides of a

single thought. The prophetic Order still shared the buoyant optimism of the nation. The typical prophet of the time is *Jonah ben Amittai*, who during a period of distress and temporary despondency assured the people that Yahweh would yet “*restore the border of Israel, from the entering of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah*”—a vaticination which no doubt helped to fulfil itself.

On the other hand, the old ferocity of the devotees of Yahweh showed little sign of yielding to the growing kindness of the time. When Ahab spared Benhadad in the new spirit of chivalrous courtesy, a prophet denounces him in the name of Yahweh—“*Thy life shall be for his life.*” The savage rage of Elijah, though the narrative is more of a romance than a history, adequately represents the prophetic spirit.

The prophets were never great supporters of sacrifice and priestly torah. In many cases, no doubt, they lived in the shrines as convenient religious centres; but the bond between Yahweh and his people was in the divine inspiration—“the word of Yahweh”—which he entrusted to the prophets. The primitive desert-sacrifice was enough for them, and the elaboration of ceremonial was a fatuity, since Yahweh had not commanded it.

It is curious to note that both conservative and critical students have great difficulty in connecting the “writing” Prophets with the prophetic Order.

Most of them declare for an almost complete separation between them. This is unjust all round, and is indeed a counsel of despair. It is unjust to the Order to rob it of its noblest members; it is unjust to the great prophets to take away the platform on which they stand, and to leave them as "original thinkers" suspended *in vacuo*; it is unjust to the whole method of historical development, for it reduces us to the position of accepting these writers as new and inexplicable factors in the world's history. Either they were prophets or they were miracles.

The question does, indeed, present a certain amount of difficulty, and the case of each prophet must be examined by itself to determine how far the "isolation" is one of status and fundamental thought, and how far it is superficial and rhetorical. In the period under notice we have the first example of the isolated prophet in the case of *Micaiah ben Imlah*, who opposed Zedekiah ben Chenaanah and his four hundred colleagues. Happily the example is a very simple one.

Note the following points:—

(1) The question at issue is on the ancient prophetic subject—Will the proposed battle be successful?

(2) Zedekiah and Micaiah give opposite answers, each on the authority of Yahweh.

(3) Micaiah does not venture to question Zede-

kiah's inspiration, but explains that Yahweh has intentionally misled him.

(4) No ethical questions are alluded to.

(5) Micaiah is justified by the result.

The importance of the passage is very great. It shows that individualism had spread so far that a prophet would oppose his own vision to the prophecy of the Order in general; and it shows how that opposition might be entirely independent of any difference of opinion on theological or ethical questions.

The greatest name of the period is *Elisha ben Shaphat*, a man of transcendent importance, to whom justice has perhaps never yet been done. He is veiled from us by the bright nimbus of miracle with which the contemporary chroniclers have glorified him, and he is partially hidden by the terrific figure of Elijah. Yet on the bare ground of chronology he is evidently most valuable, since his activity extended from the time of Ahab to that of Joash, the predecessor of Jeroboam II., under whom written prophecy made its appearance. The discussion of his place in history had better be deferred until we have reached the firm ground of the *terminus ad quem*—Amos and Hosea.

CHAPTER XI

THE ASSYRIAN INVASIONS

WE have now reached the period of that great and sombre movement of history which resulted on the one hand in the destruction of Western Semitic civilisation, and on the other in the establishment of those great religious principles which still dominate the thought of the world. Hitherto there had been nothing to discriminate clearly between Israel and the other young nations of the Mediterranean coast, but the time was at hand when the people would be stamped with the impress which they still bear after the lapse of twenty-five centuries.

Assyria was not a new-comer in the West. The Syrians of Damascus and the other great cities of the North had encountered her in many rough battles, and had held their own for the most part. When Shalmaneser II. endeavoured to subdue the West in the middle of the Ninth Century B.C., King Ahab of Samaria fought side by side with the Syrians in the great battle of Karkar. Shalmaneser claims

it as a victory for Nineveh, but if so, it was of a Pyrrhic nature, for he advanced no further at that time. Twelve years later, when the Damascenes had been defeated, Jehu paid tribute, as is recorded on the Black Obelisk in the British Museum. But all this had meant little more than the ordinary give-and-take of war. One hundred years later Assyria definitely began her great career of conquest under the founder of what is called the Second Empire, Tiglath Pileser III.

Assyria has only herself to thank if we regard her as the "Curse of God," the most brutal power that has ever combined civilisation and conquest. The cold ferocity of the accounts which her kings themselves give of their campaigns, the deliberate way in which they glory in their shame, fill us with horror even at this distant date.

To a conquered people their fate may be the beginning of a glorious history. Although, for example, we instinctively sympathise with the heroic Gallic chiefs in their struggles against the power of Rome, yet we accept their downfall with philosophic calm, for we recognise that the conquest of Gaul by Cæsar was the essential starting-point in the career of the most brilliant nation that the world has ever seen. The siege of Alesia is a small price to pay for the twenty centuries of the history of France.

The splendid discoveries made in recent years in Assyria and Chaldea have tended to alter the whole

perspective of Biblical history. The great empires of the Tigris-Euphrates have been restored to history in the most marvellous manner, and we cannot wonder that those engaged in such a fascinating study should consider that they have found the key to very much that has hitherto been locked even outside of the territories immediately concerned. We can hardly blame them, if in the excitement of novelty, they regard Israel as a trifling, half-barbarous annexe to the great civilisation of the East.

There is, however, not the slightest occasion for us to throw the Hebrew Scriptures to the moles and to the bats, and seek the fountain-head of all Semitic wisdom in the cuneiform inscriptions. We admit gladly that, to a far greater extent than we had hitherto suspected, learning, art, law, religion came from the Eastern to the Western Semites. But let it be remembered that some such movement had always been admitted. No one denied Isaiah's statement that Israel was "replenished from the East." The change is largely one of degree.

If, however, an attempt is made to represent the Bible as being a collection of half-understood scraps of Assyrian wisdom, recorded in the dialect of one of the fringes of the Empire, we can only describe that attempt as ludicrous.

For, be it noted, the influence of Assyria was at first indirect. Chaldee-Ninevite culture filtered through Syria to Israel. Every Western nation

drew at its own pleasure, so to speak, from the Euphrates and Tigris.

The permanent value of Israel in the world's history is *itself*, and the value of the Bible is that it is Israel's account of itself. Assyria may have been to a very large extent Israel's schoolmaster ; but no one assigns the life-work of any man to his schoolmaster. It is the personality of Israel that counts.

And further. The value of Israel lies precisely in those elements which are definitely not Assyrian. The formation of the City-state and the worship of Yahweh Zebaoth — the character of the god, not the name, of course—are products of Israel's own evolution which have nothing to do with Assyria. Politics and religion—true religion—are Israel's own.

While Assyria affected the West indirectly, her influence was good ; but the moment she entered on her career of conquest she spread ruin all around. A dark-souled gloomy despotism, she simply blotted out the gallant little towns of the West which were attaining a level of true civilisation superior to her own.

She was utterly incapable of governing the people she subdued. The moment the army of occupation was withdrawn rebellion burst out instinctively, and the only way in which peace was possible was by the almost incredible System of the Second Empire. This consisted in deporting all save the poorest of the conquered people to some remote district, and

repeopling the desolate land with similar exiles from elsewhere. The idea was that people thus forcibly removed would lose all inclination to revolt; that they would naturally look to the central government as their only protector against the enmity of their new neighbours; and that through the judicious mingling of races, by scattering the deported women, a new race wholly Assyrian would arise. This masterpiece of crude folly was an utter failure. As applied to the brilliant life of the cities of the Levant, just entering on the fulness of their political and intellectual heritage, it meant mere wanton destruction, for the individual was nothing without the nexus and environment. The blossoms in the rose-garden were torn apart, and the petals re-arranged to suit the caprice of the Assyrian monarch! No permanent empire was possible on such a plan, and Assyria fell amid the execrations of the world she had ruined for ever:—

“Woe to the City of Blood!
Nineveh is destroyed,
Who will lament her?”

One policy only could have been successful in stemming the incoming flood. If Damascus, Hamath and Arpad, Tyre and Sidon, Samaria and Jerusalem, Gath and Gaza, had all stood shoulder to shoulder in the plains of Northern Syria, the Ninevite army would never have conquered the

land. That never took place: the petty jealousies and intrigues of the little states caused them to act separately both in peace and war, leagues were formed only to be broken, and there was suicidal joy when a troublesome neighbour was overthrown. Yet we can hardly regret it. They had the defects of their qualities. It was their separatism that was the very source of their excellence. Had they been united it could only have been under some despot, and the Syrian Empire might have been no better than the Assyrian. The free men were conquered by the slaves just because, under the conditions of antiquity, the virtue of freedom meant incapacity for acting together in large numbers.

The great prophets foresaw the coming storm, and so reorganised the religion of Israel that it survived the destruction of that environment of which it had been simply one aspect. It was a great work, but it was not accomplished of set purpose, and at every stage it reflects the political aspect of the time. Politics and religion go hand in hand, and if religion survives the dissolution of its partner, the credit belongs equally to each. That the work was done at Jerusalem only, is mainly due to the fact that that city had more than a century of respite, and, in fact, survived until the centre of power in the Tigris - Euphrates valley had once more shifted to Babylon.

The conquests of Assyria were carried out by

four great kings whose united reigns extended from 745 to 681 B.C.—Tiglath Pileser III., Shalmaneser IV., Sargon, and Sennacherib.

In the fourth year of Tiglath Pileser's reign he attacked the Syrian city of Arpad, and the siege occupied two years. The fall of Arpad meant the occupation of the whole valley of the Orontes, and Damascus, Tyre, and Samaria sent tribute. The last-named city was at that time under the rule of Menahem, who had killed Shallum, himself the assassin of Zechariah. Menahem's tribute consisted of 1000 talents of silver, which he collected not from the shrines, but from twenty of his wealthiest subjects—a significant note of the social position in Samaria. Menahem's son, Pekahiah, was murdered by the anti-Assyrian party under Pekah. The latter immediately formed a league with Damascus, and as the Jerusalem king, Ahaz, was pro-Assyrian, the allies attacked Judah and endeavoured ineffectually to place a Syrian on the throne. Ahaz called for assistance from Tiglath Pileser, who had for the time relinquished his attempts on the West. The Assyrian forces returned to the struggle; Pekah was killed, and the pro-Assyrian Hoshea placed on the throne of Samaria. The Northern tribes, the old "Leah," were carried into captivity. Damascus was captured after a two years' siege, and the people deported. Ahaz attended Tiglath Pileser's court at Damascus; Tyre paid a heavy fine. Troubles in

Babylon recalled the Assyrian king to the East, and the Westerns had rest until his death.

Shalmaneser IV. found a new enemy in Egypt, a country whose vigour had been for some time on the wane. Under the Ethiopian monarch So or Shabaka (if these were really names of one man) the empire of the Nile made a new attempt to recover her lost influence in the Syrian world, and succeeded in seducing Hoshea of Samaria from the Assyrian alliance. Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria and of Tyre, but did not live to see the end of either.

The siege of Samaria lasted three years; the city fell before Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser. Sargon thus records his success:—

“In the beginning of my reign I besieged, I took by the help of the god Shamash, who gives me victory over my enemies, the city of Samaria. 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried away. I took fifty chariots for my own royal share. I took them (the captives) to Assyria, and put into their places people whom my hand had conquered. I set my officers and governors over them, and laid on them a tribute.”

The writer of the Book of Kings says:—

“In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and Habor the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”

This happened in 722 B.C.

Two years later, Assyria and Egypt met at Raphia in the Philistine country and the older empire was completely routed, though Sargon was unable to follow up his advantage.

The last and most famous of the mighty Four, Sennacherib, set out westwards in his third campaign perhaps to overthrow the secret confederacy with Tirhaka of Egypt, but we must bear in mind that the part played by Egypt in all these campaigns is still somewhat uncertain. From Sidon he marched down the coast plain to the land of the Philistines. Hezekiah of Jerusalem had joined the Egyptian league and the land of Judah was ravaged. Lachish and the other fortified towns were reduced. Only Jerusalem remained. Sennacherib himself with the main army was in Philistia opposing the Egyptian advance when a frightful pestilence broke out in his camp, and between one and two hundred thousand of his soldiers died. He retreated hastily to Nineveh. The "day of Jerusalem" was not yet.

CHAPTER XII

PROPHECY AND LITERATURE IN SAMARIA

AMOS and Hosea lived and prophesied in the spacious days of Jeroboam II. It is true that the picture which they offer us of those days is not a very happy one; but it must constantly be borne in mind that they were conservatives and moralists, and that by the tradition of their Order they were enamoured of a now quite imaginary golden age—the life of the desert. They undoubtedly reveal an epoch of great material prosperity; and if Amos asserts that the whole is rotten, because the happiness of the rich is based on the misery of the poor, and if Hosea complains that there is neither truth nor mercy in the land, they only raise cries with which our own ears are, unfortunately, thoroughly familiar. Nor can we follow them, as most of their commentators do, in believing that the age was one of spiritual decay, for the simple reason that their own existence testifies against them. Neither prophets nor saints are “freaks” out of relation to their

own time. They see the plumb-line of the divine righteousness, and all human walls seem to stand far from the perpendicular. But the mere fact that they do see it, and that they get others to see it, proves that their age is not so vile as they are tempted to imagine. Even in our own less impassioned literature it might be possible to draw up a catena of moralists from Longland and Gower to Ruskin and Henry George, each demonstrating that his own period was one of unparalleled distress and wickedness.

On the whole, we may take it as the happiest and best time of Israel's history. The Syrian Wars were over, and all the debatable land had been recovered as Jonah ben Amittai prophesied. Assyria was only beginning to appear very vaguely as a danger from the North; the immediate circumstances were peace and prosperity. The king's reign lasted for forty years. The corn and the wine, the fruit and the oil, the wool and the flax were plentiful; the gold and the silver were multiplied; jewels, musical instruments, inlaid couches were found in the great houses of the upper classes.

Religion was everywhere prominent. The altars were thronged; the sacred enclosures resounded with the merry-making of a thankful people. The new moon, the harvest festival, all the great days in the calendar were honoured by a shouting crowd,

eating and drinking and rejoicing before Yahweh, the giver of all good things.

The poet sang :—

“ Happy art thou, O Israel !
Who is like thee, O people helped by Yahweh ?
He is thy saving shield,
Thy glorious sword.”

That the intellectual life of the nation was at a high standard we may be certain, from the fact that Amos and Hosea committed their prophecies to writing, or allowed their disciples to do so. Whatever may be the explanation of the state of the text of Hosea—it is confused and broken to an extraordinary extent—the mere fact of a written prophecy argues a generation already well trained in reading and writing. Written laws and annals, written ballads and tales of the heroes, all carry their own justification on their face, but not so a written prophecy. Primitive prophecy was, as we have seen, crude and strictly *ad hoc*, ringing the changes mainly on “ Thus saith Yahweh, Thou shalt go out to battle,” and “ Thou shalt not go out to battle.” As it developed in the sphere of morals its interest widened, but it was still dependent for its meaning on the circumstances under which it was delivered. It implies an advanced mental stage to see that words adapted to a special time and place have a significance which entitles them to be written down for men of other places and other times.

It is impossible to say whether Amos or Hosea was the earlier. Neither shows any dependence on the other, and, in fact, the attitudes which the two prophets adopt towards their great common theme—the relation of Yahweh to Israel—are quite distinct and almost contradictory. Hosea dwells on the passionate love of God for his people, while Amos emphasises the aloofness of One to whom the Ethiopians are as dear as the Israelites.

Of the prophet *Amos* we know little or nothing except what we learn from the book that goes by his name. He was a farmer or farm-labourer in Judah, and was “called” by Yahweh through the familiar instrument of a vision. He saw Israel being destroyed by locusts. He interceded with Yahweh and the doom was averted. He then saw Israel threatened by fire (drought), and again the coming destruction was turned aside by the prophet’s prayers. In a third vision he saw Yahweh testing the walls of Samaria with a plumb-line, and announcing, “*I will not pass by any more.*”

Amos then set out to prophesy against Israel.

When he arrived at the great shrine of Bethel he announced that the prosperity of the House of Jeroboam would be transitory and would end in bloodshed.

Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel, not unnaturally supposed that he was, *more prophético*, the avant-courier of some pretender to the throne, and

accordingly reported the matter to the king. Apparently the royal injunctions were simply to the effect that he must order Amos to leave Israel, for the priest rather scornfully bids him depart to his own land. Amos pronounces a fearful curse on him, and after more visions and declamations disappears from history.

There is a quaint story in the Book of Kings about an unnamed man of God from Judah who denounced King Jeroboam at the shrine of Bethel. The story at present figures in the time of Jeroboam *the First*, two hundred years before the age of Amos, but it is not impossible that it has been inserted in the wrong reign. But even if we were sure that it related to Amos it is by no means a good authority. The legend tells us that the prophet met the king himself at Bethel, proved his divine mission by hypnotising him, and then won the royal favour by restoring him. On the way back to Judah the prophet was killed by a lion.

As to the manner of his death, at all events, we may be certain that the legend is in error, since the prophet lived at least long enough to write his book in a style which implies care and leisure.

The hypnotism incident is not impossible—although one hardly likes to think of Amos adopting such methods—for it is by no means necessary to suppose that the prophet obeyed Amaziah's command to depart. A prophet, especially a great

prophet, was a difficult person to deal with. His personal kodesh protected him very greatly ; and if Amos insisted on stopping in Bethel he probably carried his point.

The prophet's book falls into two portions, of which the latter should be read first, as it is the historical sketch which only gives the prophecy in outline. The earlier part is the prophecy finally arranged and edited in rhetorical and consecutive form—the whole teaching redacted into one oration.

The prophet's "call" took, as has been said, the form of a vision of locusts, just as Jeremiah's was expressed by the vision of an almond-tree, and Ezekiel's by a whirlwind. That these visions were objective, or at least had an objective basis, need not be questioned, for the inspiration comes like a flash—by this or that object Yahweh means so-and-so. This is obvious, because the revelation often takes the form (to us almost inconceivable) of a pun. Amos, for example, sees fruit (*kayiz*), and understands that Yahweh is bringing on the end (*kez*) ; Jeremiah sees the almond-tree (*shaked*), and understands that Yahweh is watching (*shoked*). Other visions may have been almost entirely subjective ; such are Micaiah's vision of Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep, Amos' vision of Yahweh on the altar at Bethel, and Isaiah's vision of the Seraphim. Yet it is impossible to draw any hard and fast line between the two classes, since we have visions which

hold an intermediate place. Thus when Zechariah saw the Four Carpenters, probably other men saw them also—the prophet simply puts a mystic interpretation on four honest Jerusalem workmen; when he saw Yahweh, Satan, the Angel, and the High Priest, the whole scene was enacted before his mind's eye only; but when, in the state of one “wakened out of his sleep,” he sees golden candlesticks and olive trees in juxtaposition, it is difficult to say how far they had a place in the external world.

Of Amos' reception into the Prophetic Order we know nothing. Certain critics have raised a huge inverted pyramid on his exclamation to Amaziah, “*No prophet I, and no prophet's son I; but a herdsman and fig-gatherer I; and Yahweh took me as I followed the flock, and Yahweh said to me, Go, prophesy.*” Amos, it seems, indignantly repudiates being taken for one of the professional prophets; he regards them as miserable wretches, heathen diviners, and what not. Hence it follows that his religion was totally different from theirs. And therefore we may take it that what we know as the prophetic religion really has its origin in Amos. And so forth. It reminds one of the amazing deductions Carlyle drew from John Stirling's youthful remark about the “black dragoons.”

Amos certainly states in this outbreak that he gave up his means of livelihood in order to carry out Yahweh's instructions, and therefore cannot be

accused of prophesying for bread. Further, both he and Amaziah imply that there were prophets who practised their art for the sake of gain. But it is a very different thing to suppose that both Amaziah and Amos condemned the Prophetic Order and its functions. It is mere imagination to see in Amos a great individuality remote from the sects and methods of his time. The mode of his illumination—by visions; the use of technical prophetic phrases—as *debar Yahweh*, the word of Yahweh; the very content of the message—foretelling a coming defeat in battle; all these declare him to be a prophet in the straight line of descent.

There is really no need to labour the point, for the connected oration which forms the earlier part of the prophet's book alludes to the Amaziah incident thus:—

“I (Yahweh) raised up of your sons for prophets . . . and ye commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.”

Prophecy is one of Yahweh's best gifts to Israel, and by Amaziah's words Yahweh is insulted through the Prophetic Order, not through Amos personally.

That Amos was the spiritual leader of his day there can be no doubt; but if he had been literally out of sight of the main army he would have been of no use to them, and there is no reason to suppose that his name, much less his writings, would have been preserved. He represents the best of his time,

but he was no more "alone" than S. Francis or S. Theresa or Henry Martyn.

The prophecy of Amos is a splendid example of the oratory which is impassioned and yet held in severe restraint. The matter of it can be stated briefly.

It is an announcement of disaster threatening the State in the form of a hostile invasion. To predict such things was one of the principal functions of the prophets of antiquity. Yahweh has been alienated and will allow, nay, bring about, this misfortune. It is practically inevitable; Amos already sings the *kinah* of the House of Israel:—

"The virgin of Israel is fallen :
She shall no more rise :
She is forsaken upon her land,
None raising her up."

Yahweh is angry with the luxuries of Israel. It is the old prophetic dislike. Houses of hewn stone, built with apartments both for the hot and the cold season, beds of ivory, musical instruments, wine in bowls—"*Adonai Yahweh has sworn by himself, I abhor the exaltation of Jacob and hate his palaces.*"

But there is a new note. The luxury is not condemned *per se* or because it unfits men for war, but because it is built up on the toil, wretchedness, and oppression of the poor. The palaces are filled with "violence and spoil"—that is how the costly furniture and hangings appear to the prophet. The

everlasting curse of the East, bribery in the law-courts, deprives the poor man of his right. The fines of the temples are an important source of revenue to the great families that hold the priesthoods.

In violation of the kodesh of Yahweh's sanctuary old men and young seduce the country girls who come to the feasts. The whole State is rotten. Samaria and all its boasted greatness is fit only for destruction.

Nothing could illustrate better the intense conservatism of Hebrew prophecy. The growth of the towns, the whole pledge of the future, is to Amos simply an unmitigated evil. Scornfully he takes the great prophecy of Jonah ben Amittai, which had been so happily fulfilled, and reverses it in the name of Yahweh—"they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah."

For the public worship of the shrines Amos has nothing but hatred and contempt. It is a mockery, for not smoking sacrifices but justice, justice in the law-courts, is what Yahweh demands. It is a futility, because it was never asked for; in the Golden Age where was the cultus? "*Did ye offer unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?*" Yahweh is not to be found at Bethel, or Gilgal, or Beersheba. He is not in any shrine, but, like the king, he has his officers of state—the prophets—and to them he entrusts his *sôd*, his secret counsel.

The most striking thought in the theology of Amos is that Yahweh is the god of all nations. He has given them all the lands in which they live ; he punishes them all for their sins. The existence of separate gods for Damascus and Moab and Edom is not even denied—it is assumed that Yahweh governs all.

It is true that Yahweh stands in a unique relation to Israel, but that is not because they offer him sacrifices, but because he speaks to them by prophets. Yahweh has “known” Israel, *i.e.* he has caused Israel to know him. But what of that? It simply means that they are less excusable for their violations of justice and morality. “*Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.*”

In turning from Amos to Hosea we pass from Judahite to Israelite religion. It is as if we passed from the stern and terrifying grandeur of some lonely desert-mountain to a fertile valley with vineyards and cornfields, with the sound of running water and the lowing of cattle.

The root idea of Baal-worship was, as we have said, the divine marriage ; the baal was the great fertilising power (by springs or by rain), and the land was the mighty mother from whose womb sprang all living things, including the clan itself. In Israel the most fertile valley was called by the simple and significant name Jezreel—*God sows*.

But although the desert-god Yahweh had become "baalised" and conceived as the divine father, yet some trace of the old nomadic life survives in the fact that he is regarded rather as the husband of the *nation* than as the husband of the land.

Hosea (or *Hoshea*) *ben Beeri* was apparently a devoted worshipper of Yahweh according to the customary mode, rejoicing in the cultus of the shrines. He married Gomer bath Diblaim, and in thankful joy named his first-born son "Jezreel," seeing, by a far-off anticipation of S. Paul, a *magnum sacramentum* and a type of the divine marriage in his happy intercourse with Gomer. He loved his wife with an enthusiastic passion; the union seemed to be as close, as perfect, as satisfying as that of Yahweh and Israel.

A second child was born, a daughter, and he named her "Ruhamah"—"Tenderly loved" we might render it, though in its later use the idea of *compassion* is perhaps stronger than that of love.

Before the birth of the third child the whole glory died out of his life in one moment, and Hosea was left desolate, forlorn, hopeless—Gomer was guilty of adultery. The child she bears is not his, and he exclaims passionately:—

"Give her—O Yahweh, what wilt thou give her?
Give her a miscarrying womb and dry breasts."

In the many-sided life of a nation it depends not

only on our own temperament but on the people among whom we live, and the objects to which we direct our attention, whether the time may be described as happy or unhappy, moral or immoral. Hosea had hitherto looked on the bright side of life, but at once his whole view alters. The happy Israel rejoicing before its god becomes dark with horrid crimes. Swearing, lying, killing, stealing are the notes of Israel. Above all, lust, lust and drunkenness, are eating out the heart of the nation.

He seeks the root of all this wickedness so suddenly become prominent to his eye, and, arguing from his own desolate hearth, he finds the answer, "*The land hath committed great adultery against Yahweh.*"

This answer seems absurd on the face of it. Do not the shrines ring with the praise of Yahweh? Does he not respond with corn and oil and wine? Has he not saved Israel out of the hand of all that oppressed her? Is he not the only object of her worship?

Hosea takes a strange line of thought. They say, he seems to argue, that it is Yahweh whom they worship, but that cannot be. These shrines were here before Israel entered the country. These sacrifices went on long before the name of Yahweh was heard in the temple courts. They *call* the god of Gilgal and of Dan Yahweh, but it is a name only; the gods they worship are really the

old Canaanite baalim who have never been displaced. Israel knows not Yahweh her divine husband ; the gods she worships are her paramours, her wicked lovers.

A strange thought, and, one would imagine, singularly unconvincing to the average Israelite ; nearly as much so as when the Protestant lecturer of our day assures the Romanist that when he invokes the Blessed Virgin he is really calling, not on the Mother of the Lord, but on Semiramis. "Yahweh, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt," was the deity of every altar.

But Hosea was in earnest, and entered the ranks of the prophets in order to spread his new doctrine.

The child was born, and Hosea named him *Lo-Ammi*, "Not my people" ; Ruhamah's name he altered to *Lo-Ruhamah*, "Not tenderly loved." Jezreel he left unaltered, but the name took on a sinister application ; the once happy valley is seen to be deeply stained with uncovered blood. "*Yet a little while and I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the House of Jehu.*"

Amos had said that Yahweh would refuse to smell in the feasts ; Hosea denounces the whole cultus, root and branch, as a continuous infidelity against the true God. Nothing pleases him in Israel ; the king is a drunkard and a usurper, the nobles are his tutors in vice, the priests are apostate and abandoned by God, the nation is a wild ass wandering obstin-

ately to destruction. We can hardly wonder that he found himself unpopular, called "fool" and "madman," and that he saw "the snare of the fowler in all his ways."

In the forefront of his prophecy Hosea sets his sinful wife and dishonoured children as types of the nation. It is absurd to accuse him of lack of delicacy in thus parading his domestic unhappiness. It is the destruction of his home that has been his "call"—no need for any further "vision." He himself has become a "man of God," a mere spokesman of the divine, and it is his duty to pour out God's words before a corrupt and adulterous generation.

"Plead with your mother, plead ;
For she is not my wife
Nor I her husband."

Is all over then, is there no hope? In Israel, none ; but in Yahweh all hope, because all love.

A great poet of Israel had sung :—

"Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it";

and Hosea had found it true in his own case. His love for Gomer was still strong ; how much more then must the divine Husband, in all his anguish be longing for his sinful spouse ?

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ?
And surrender thee, Israel ?
How shall I make thee as Admah ?

And set thee as Zeboim ?
 Mine heart is turned within me,
 My compassions are kindled together.
 I will not execute my fierce anger,
 I will not bring Ephraim again to nothing ;
 For I am God, and not man,
 The Holy One in the midst of thee."

It was a new song in the ears of humanity—the passionate love of a righteous God for sinful man.

Yahweh will restore Israel's love for himself by taking her once more into the desert. The happy days of innocency will return, when Yahweh found Israel like early grapes in the wilderness, and taught the little child to walk holding on by his hand. He will bring her there again and "speak to her heart."

There her early love will return, Yahweh will forgive all her offences, and the grand chorus will arise for the great remarriage, the Epithalamium of Yahweh and Israel.

"I will betroth thee unto me for ever ;
 Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies :
 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness ;
 And thou shalt know Yahweh.
 And it shall come to pass in that day,
 I will answer, saith Yahweh,
 I will answer the heavens,
 And they shall answer the earth ;
 And the earth shall answer corn and wine and oil,
 And they shall answer 'Jezreel !'
 And I will sow her unto me in the earth :
 And I will have 'tender love' for Lo-Ruhamah,
 And I will say to Lo-Ammi—' Ammi,—my people' :
 And they shall say ' My God ! ' "

The great constructive value of Hosea in theology is quite indirect—he never insists in terms on the *value of God to the individual soul*; but it was this that made him the master of all subsequent prophets, and especially of Jeremiah. Hosea found God not only in the normal nexus of daily life, but in its destruction. The baal worshipper adores a giver of gifts; the true follower of Yahweh finds in God himself the best of all gifts.

In Hosea sin is sin *per se*; even in Amos it was still wrong done to the poor. Hosea thinks little of the wronged *man*; it is the injured love of God which distresses him.

It is striking to note how the form of prophecy remains the same. Hosea's impassioned appeals still take the antique form—a warning of an unsuccessful battle because Yahweh is dissatisfied.

CHAPTER XIII

PROPHECY AND LITERATURE IN SAMARIA (*continued*)

IN order to appreciate the period itself, and to understand how far the great moralist prophets were or were not in opposition to the spirit of the age, we must turn to those other works, embedded in Holy Scripture, which may be supposed with a fair degree of certainty to belong to the reign of Jeroboam II. Two characteristic works in prose and two in verse will suffice.

The prose works are both found in a fragmentary condition in the Book of Kings. We may call them the *Prophetical History of Israel* and the *Miracles of Elisha*.

The *Prophetical History* was a great work. It is full of legitimate pride in the Nation on the one hand and in the Order on the other. The writer makes no attempt to reach an impartial standpoint in the extreme sense, for his interest is obviously with his people; but he records facts accurately as he knew them. Defeat and disaster

are described as bravely as victory and prosperity. The interest of the work is thoroughly political: the Syrian Wars and the doings of the kings are the great theme, and it is handled with a certain breadth of treatment. But the author has another purpose in view as well. He wishes to show how important his own Order was in the State. His text might well have been the saying of Amos, "*Surely Adonai Yahweh will do nothing without showing his intention to his servants the prophets.*" They advise or rebuke at every turn, and the prosperity of the nation depends on the king listening to their words. The priestly torah is ignored by the writer, and cultus is rarely alluded to. The king of Moab offers his son in sacrifice, and on one occasion the writer fixes the time of day by the "meal-offering"; that is all. The whole conception of religion is prophetic; priests play no part. So thoroughly is the writer imbued with the spirit of the Order that he frequently omits to mention the name of his speakers; "a prophet" or "a man of God," he says—"one of ours," as it were.

The period covered by the fragments extends from the reign of Ahab to that of Joash, the father of Jeroboam II. The author has a fine patriotic appreciation of his kings, though where they and the prophets quarrel he naturally supports the latter. He is quite definite in attributing Jehu's revolt to the uncovered blood of Naboth.

This last is the only important point of ethics which arises. The story as a whole is—Israel ruled by her kings; the kings instructed by the prophets; the prophets inspired by Yahweh.

The book is written in a fine robust style, with sufficient detail to make it vastly interesting, and yet with the broad outline constantly in view. The highest point is reached in the account of how King Ahab came by his death; but the sections relating the coming of Jehu to Jezreel, and the visit of King Joash to the dying Elisha, are quite in the first flight of pictorial history.

A hearty, boisterous age the prophet pictures; rather brutal according to our notions, not squeamish at the sight of blood, and only really disliking war when it meant being cooped up and starved to a surrender, or when one's own women and children were cut to pieces. Nor is there wanting a certain caustic humour, as when Benhadad sneers, "*Samaria will not supply a handful apiece to my army,*" and Ahab retorts, "*Let not him that buckles on, brag like him that takes off.*"

The *Miracles of Elisha* is a book of quite another sort. The writer is some pious, credulous old prophet wrapt up in the greatness of his Saint. He resembles, for all the world, a mediæval monkish hagiographer born eighteen centuries before his time. His interest is entirely personal, not political. The great movements of history are nothing to him.

He likes, indeed, to introduce great folk into his pages. We can almost see the smile of satisfaction on his face as he writes the words, "*So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha*"; and again, "*The king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.*" But these great people only come into the story to add to the renown of the central figure.

It is a very pleasant picture which is presented to our notice. The barren wife becomes fruitful, the leper is healed, the dead child is restored to life. The book is written in a fine anecdotal style, full of kindly, sympathetic expressions. The little boy, out in the field with the reapers, said to his father, "My head, my head!" The flesh of the leprous Syrian becomes "like the flesh of a little child." Naturally in the present day we would have preferred to have more history and fewer miracles, and yet it may be questioned if we should not be losers after all. An accurate account of the great campaign of Hazael is certainly much to be desired. But we have many historians of successful wars; there is only one writer of the *Miracles of Elisha*.

What a delightful story is that (not without a slightly amusing element) of the excellent way in which the great Saint brought one of the Syrian

Wars to a close! He struck the Syrian army with blindness; offered to act as guide, and led them into the city of Samaria; opened their eyes; and then persuaded the king of Israel to entertain them at a feast and send them off home—the best of friends ever after!

Occasionally, indeed, Elisha's miracles appear to us in rather a different light from that in which our author probably regarded them, as when he cursed a number of mocking children and immediately forty-two of them were torn by she-bears; or when he strikes the faithful Gehazi with leprosy for making a little private profit out of his master's miracles. Such incidents are rare; taken as a whole the picture is delightful.

“And then how good he was to the Order,” is the constantly recurring thought. When the prophets are accidentally poisoned, he renders the food harmless; he miraculously increases their small stock of provisions; when the axe-head borrowed by a prophet falls into the water, he makes it swim on the surface. Even for the widow of a prophet he works a miracle, multiplying her one possession of a little oil, until she has enough to save her sons from being sold as slaves.

Not even his own death brings to an end the miracles of this great man of God. A corpse is hastily laid in the grave of Elisha, and as soon as it touches his bones, returns to life.

There is almost as little mention of cultus in the *Miracles* as in the *History*. We learn the interesting fact that when men wished to consult a prophet they generally went at the New Moon or on the Seventh Day. There is mention of Jordan as a river whose waters have miraculous properties. The question of "worshipping in the House of Rimmon" will be discussed later.

The two poetical works we shall examine are the *Blessing of the Tribes* and the *Song of Songs*.

From the *Blessing of the Tribes* we have already had occasion to make several quotations. It is now found in the same volume as Josiah's Legislation, but must be earlier. The Blessing of Judah fixes the *terminus a quo* as the reign of Jeroboam I.; the Blessing of Naphtali fixes the *terminus ad quem* as the reign of Pekah. We may narrow these limits by considering that the time is one of great peace and plenty, and the writer shows no signs of the influence of Hosea. The most likely date is therefore soon after the end of the Syrian Wars, early in the reign of Jeroboam II.

The poem is a fine expression of that civilised, patriotic religion of which we have spoken. It represents the high-water mark of national religion before it underwent transformation at the hands of the great prophets. It is full of the joy of life, full of sublime confidence in the destiny of the nation,

which is safe in the hands of Yahweh. The enemies of Israel are the enemies of Yahweh, and he will tread them down on their high places.

The blessings which Yahweh gives are the fruitful soil and the priestly torah. The heavens and the dew, the deep that lies underneath, the sun and the moons, all give their preciousness to the land of Israel. The Thummim and the Urim (forms of kodesh lots), the judgments of Yahweh and his torah given by the hand of the kodesh Levites, these are also the gifts of God. The writer rejoices in the cultus of the shrines. The sacrifices smoking on the altar, the people summoned to the mountain sanctuaries are the signs of the presence of Yahweh.

There is no mention whatever of the prophets!

The *Shir hash-Shirim*, the Song of Songs, is in some ways the more valuable because it is not a religious, *i.e.* theological, composition. Various explanations have been given of its form; it has been regarded as one poem, as a collection of poems, as the "book" of a lyrical drama. What concerns us now is the substance, not the form.


It might indeed be questioned whether it is not a Judahite composition. The scene of action is Jerusalem. But this is almost certainly adopted simply to bring in Solomon as the typical "harem-king." The poet constantly introduces northern localities—Gilead, Lebanon, Hermon, Carmel. He exclaims, "*Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah*

comely as Jerusalem." This would surely be impossible for a Judahite.

It is obvious from considerations already mentioned that the date can hardly be earlier than the close of the Syrian Wars.

The theme of the poem is passionate delight in human loveliness—of the woman mainly, but as the author is a true poet he describes the delight of woman in the physical beauty of man. Love and its consummation are the glorious expression of the appreciation of beauty.

But the author is no sensualist in the lower sense. He derides the idea that there is a greater satisfaction in many than in one :—

“There are sixty queens and eighty concubines and untold virgins; 
My dove, my undefiled is one.”

The man who thinks to purchase “love” is hopelessly ignorant of the whole subject :—

“If a man would give all the substance of his house for love
It would be utterly despised.”

The Song of Songs is the highest point, the last word of erotic poetry. Just as the writer of the Song of Deborah had mastered poetic form and yet entered whole-heartedly into the thrill of battle and victory in a way impossible to any later, more introspective, more merciful age, so the author of the Shir wrote at the meeting-point of physical and

spiritual love. Poetry had come, modesty had not come. Girls were openly sold, and when the poet writes with entire freedom he is in no way exceeding the limits of ordinary conversation. Hence he has reached a perfection which can never be attained again.

A careful consideration of the works of these four great Anonymi shows us that there is not such a vast hiatus between the educated classes generally in Jeroboam's reign and the great prophets Amos and Hosea as we are apt to suppose. The four writers are all men of power, education, ideas, and individuality; they are not preoccupied with morals. But we cannot all be professional moralists; art and history also have claims on humanity.

For the prophets, moreover, the times had somewhat changed. The four Anonymi wrote in the halcyon days of peace and prosperity. Amos and Hosea prophesied when the great Assyrian movement had begun. That they actually foresaw the Assyrian conquest is extremely doubtful, but the great feeling of unrest was beginning to stir in the Semitic world, and "sensitives" like these prophets were the first to be affected by it. With Amos especially we see clearly that he was conscious simply of a vague alarm, a haunting fear of impending disaster. He first fears the destruction of the crops by locusts, then the recurrence of the famine from drought which so frequently afflicted the land; only when these fears

have passed does he hear the word of Yahweh, "*I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.*" Hosea is equally vague; the Assyrian figures rather as a useless ally than as an enemy. Even the phrase "*the Assyrian shall be their king*" suggests a voluntary submission. The punishment is to be a temporary sojourn in the desert or a general dispersion, and Hosea does not explain how Yahweh is going to effect this.

Naturally this sense of overhanging gloom makes the prophets serious, and turns their thoughts to the offences of Israel against Yahweh.

Prophetic indifference to the cultus of the shrines was a note of the Order. There had never before been active hostility because there had not yet been occasion for it, but the prophets regarded their own function as the really vital one in the state. Not slaying oxen but taking the advice of ecstasies was the way to secure victory. The active hostility of Amos arises from the fact that the cultus is rendering the people deaf to the word of Yahweh by his servants the prophets. The ritual was accurately performed, Yahweh showed no sign of displeasure; what, the people naturally asked, was all the trouble about? The terrible anger of Hosea against the shrines is due not so much to dislike of them in themselves as to his theological theory that they are the formal "adultery" of Israel.

That these "great" prophets had a certain amount

of opposition from their own Order is highly probable. They prophesied disaster while the Order, as a whole, was still prophesying prosperity. Amos and Hosea were the first to hear the sigh of the rising tempest, and were accordingly derided by those who still failed to hear it. But obviously their only *locus standi* was *quâ* prophets, and they clearly imply their belief in the Order as a whole, though their contemporaries fall under their censure. But even the fact of their "isolation" must not be exaggerated. The preservation of their prophecies ✓ proves that they had plenty of disciples. And in the case of Jeremiah we find that although he pictures himself as utterly alone, his own writings prove that this was very far from being actually the case.

When we come to examine the sins of Israel we find both in Amos and Hosea that the root of the matter is the growing luxury of the upper classes. Even where the connection is not obvious a little reflection will show it. Thus in Hosea the sins of lust and drunkenness are both the sins of a moneyed class; for the constant consorting with *kodesh* women and the free use of a costly article like wine—costly, that is, in sufficient quantity to produce intoxication—were impossible in an earlier and poorer age. So in Amos the habitual bribery and infliction of temple-fines had their origin in the appreciation of the purchasing power of money. To the prophets as the exponents of primitive sim-

plicity the great movement of civilisation was inexplicable, and in a narrow spirit they fastened their attention exclusively on the seamy side of progress. Yet this very restriction of vision is their strength. The real "novelty" of Amos and Hosea is the passionate way in which they identify themselves and their god with a hatred of those wrongs for which there is no remedy among men. Yahweh has, so to speak, superseded the Salomonic king. All earth's judgments are the carrying out of the divine justice. Where there is no legal remedy or where injustice is too strong, Yahweh will promptly intervene and take the case into his own hands. He still judges by nations not individuals, and therefore the whole nation will be punished.

Two ideas remain for notice—the elevation of Yahweh in Amos, by which he is the god of all nations; and the compassion of Yahweh in Hosea, by which he loves while he is angry. These prophets introduced no new god; Yahweh was the known god with the known history of his dealings with Israel. Further, the prophets give no intimation that they are innovating in any way. Amos throws his most striking statements into rhetorical questions, evidently anticipating the answer, "Certainly." Now these two ideas come to us full-blown, as it were. It is obvious that they have had a history. Yet they are no part of primitive Yahwism or primitive Baalism. There is only one name in

the history with which we can connect their origin—Elisha ben Shaphat.

The political influence of Elisha was great. He had “poured water on the hands” of the great Elijah, and after the death of the latter he became the head, probably the informal head, of the Order. There was a settled hostility between Elisha and King Joram. This was deplorable, as Joram seems to have been an excellent king—as kings went in those days. Even the pessimistic compiler of the Book of Kings admits that he was not as bad as Ahab—the highest praise he bestows on any Northern king.

The trouble arose over the uncovered blood of Naboth. Elijah, full of zeal and fury, had poured the terrific prophetic curse on Ahab and all his house. Ahab had repented and humbled himself before Yahweh, and his piety had secured the escape of himself personally, though the curse still impended over his descendants. When Ahaziah fell out of an upper window and killed himself, it might have been supposed that the “voice of the blood” would be silenced, as in the case of the death of David’s infant son. But unfortunately Elijah, in his enthusiasm, had cursed the whole family root and branch. This was the miserable heritage of Joram on the one hand and Elisha on the other, and, though they were both good men, it naturally made friendly relations impossible.

There is no more convincing proof of the honesty of Hebrew prophecy than the way in which Elisha, anxiously looking for Joram to come to a bad end, still prophesies success. Thus, when the army had got into difficulties in the Moabite campaign, Elisha was called in. He begins by jeering at the king, and suggesting that he had better call together that unhappy band of prophets who had persuaded Ahab his father to go to his death at Ramoth Gilead. When, however, he actually gets to his vaticination he prophesies a successful issue, which in fact occurred. Again, when the Syrians besieged Samaria, Elisha prophesied that Yahweh would deliver the city. Relying on this word of Yahweh Joram held out in spite of famine. There is a fine picture of the king going his rounds, anguish at his heart and a hair shirt on his body under his royal robes. When he finds that the women are devouring their own children he loses all hope, and announces that Elisha will be put to death as a false prophet. Elisha responds *more prophetico* by calling him "the son of a murderer," but still foretells deliverance in twenty-four hours. The siege was raised within that time.

When Joram went to Ramoth Gilead and was actually wounded, Elisha's hopes must have been high that the long-suspended judgment was coming. But the king returned, and before many days was convalescent. Elisha could wait no longer ; he gave

the signal to Jehu, and the great House of Omri was wiped out in blood.

A sad story, but how shall we apportion the blame among Jezebel, Ahab, Elijah, and Elisha? How shall we analyse Elisha's own motives and say how far loyalty to his late master and zeal for Yahweh were stimulated by mere desire for the credit of the Order of which he was the head? We have seen that he was an honest prophet; we must think of him in this matter as kindly as we can. In time the prophets themselves withdrew their sanction from the rebellion, and announced that the blood of Joram was calling for vengeance.

In a sense Elisha brought his punishment on himself. The change of dynasty weakened Israel, and throughout the dark reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz he had to prophesy disaster. Only at the end of his long life did the cloud lighten, and under Joash he was able on his death-bed to predict victory. He was the greatest man in all Israel. It is a fine picture Joash weeping over the dying prophet—*“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.”*

Thus far, however, we have found nothing but a man of vigorous and commanding personality. There is one section from the *Prophetical History* that exhibits him in a new light—the story of his visit to Damascus. We may be certain that this comes from the *History* not the *Miracles*, because it

contains no miracle, only an ordinary vaticination, and because the *interest* of the passage is national not personal. The *History* has very high value as an authority, and therefore we may take the story as substantially accurate. It throws light on two points, the position of the prophet and his character. His position is *international*, he is consulted by the king of Damascus. This is not so impossible as we might suppose. As ecstasy was the basis of prophecy and the proof of inspiration, a man might evidently hear the divine voice, or a divine voice, from the lips of a foreigner. The consulting of foreign shrines was not unknown to the Greeks, for example. But Elisha was no mere ecstatic; he was one of the leading public men of Samaria, and when we find him inquired of as a "man of God" by Benhadad, it is obvious that the greatness of the man has overleapt national boundaries. For Elisha is a professed devotee of Yahweh; he is not inspired by a vague "El," and where he goes, so to speak, he takes Yahweh with him. In history fact precedes theory. It was the international greatness of Elisha that led men to believe in the international greatness of Elisha's god. By the time of Amos it had become a commonplace in Israel that Yahweh was the god of Damascus. Where shall we seek the root of such a belief? Obviously in some *fact*, in Yahweh having acted as the god of the Damascenes. And such action we find in the story of

Elisha. The same point is brought out, though with much less claim to credence as to *facts*, in the story of Naaman from the *Miracles*. Naaman the Syrian comes to be healed, and is healed by Elisha. When he is returning to Damascus he makes two requests. First for a load of earth, and second for permission to worship in the House of Rimmon, his national god. Elisha grants both. The earth is to be used of course in building an altar to Yahweh of soil which belongs to him—quaint primitive materialism. The worship in the House of Rimmon is required by his status as noble of Damascus. Apparently Elisha thought as little of the one as of the other. He has no objection to Naaman sacrificing to Yahweh or to Rimmon, or to both or to neither. The voice of Yahweh by the hand of the prophets is the nexus between God and man, and Naaman has obeyed that by bathing in Jordan. Everything else is indifferent.

It may seem harder to connect Elisha with the lovingkindness of Yahweh which we find in Hosea, but here also the visit to Damascus throws some light. The prophet appears in a new character, weeping over the havoc which Hazael will work in Israel. Moreover, the very existence of the record of Elisha's miracles points in its own way to the prophet as the instaurator of new religious ideas.

For the miracles reveal a totally new phase, so to say, of Yahweh's character—a tender love for

individuals, a care for women and for children. Miracles of healing gather round the names of few great men ; it requires a special type of character to call such stories into being. Mere love to humanity is not enough ; the man or woman must produce the impression of a soul satisfied, fully satisfied, with divine blessing, and so able to impart it to others. The *Miracles of Elisha* may be unhistorical in fact, but we can hardly doubt that it reproduces the character of Elisha as it appeared to his contemporaries. And from the man of God himself we can surely argue back to his own idea of the god that inspired him.

CHAPTER XIV

MICAH

“ I will make Samaria as an heap of the field,
As plantings of a vineyard.
And I will pour down her stones into the valley,
And I will uncover her foundations.”

So prophesied *Micah the Morasthite* shortly before the destruction which overthrew the Northern Kingdom.

Samaria perished for ever. The hard-won civilisation, the arts, the poetry, the prophecy of her great men were ground under the heel of the Assyrian Conqueror and the dawning glory vanished from the earth.

It is a generous emotion that leads men to believe that it cannot *all* have vanished, and that somewhere on the world's surface are to be found the descendants of the nation that produced Omri, Ahab, and Joram, Elijah, Elisha, and Hosea. The quaint and wayward fancies which find the “Lost Ten Tribes” in Afghanistan or Burmah, in Africa or the

British Isles, are a strong testimony to the haunting beauty of Samaria. But such theories represent a misapprehension of the political state of Northern Israel. The individual was still far too closely bound up in the organic whole to endure separation. When Hosea prophesied

“ The Bné Israel shall abide many days
Without a king and without a noble,
Without a sacrifice and without a pillar,
Without an ephod and teraphim,”

he pictured an imaginary return to the simple conditions of the Desert, while reserving to Israel all the theological and ethical gains of civilisation. But it was impossible. The national god was still so closely bound up with the national life that on the overthrow of the monarchy and the aristocracy, on the destruction of the shrines and the burning of the city, Yahweh—in one sense a name for this very nexus—vanished and the people fell in as units into the Assyrian life and religion. Nothing but the freedom and constitutionalism of the developed City-state, which struck the exquisite balance between individualism and collective life, which rounded off each member of the ruling class into a unity without destroying the civism of the whole, could withstand the dissolving action of imperial tyranny. And advanced as Samaria was she had not yet reached that point. She had attained no self-consciousness.

It would be absurd of course to describe Amos

and Hosea as deep thinkers, for their strength lay elsewhere ; but at least they had vigorous intellects, and yet they entirely misunderstood the tendency of their own day.

Equally in the dark is the prophet Micah, the first Judahite writing prophet whose words are addressed mainly to the South. He is essentially the " man from the country " to whom city life is an abomination. He states the matter with admirable precision :—

“ What is the transgression of Jacob ?
Is it not Samaria ?
And what is the sin of Judah ?
Is it not Jerusalem ? ”

Notice that it is not the shrines, as with Hosea, nor the law courts, as with Amos, that are the offence ; it is the cities themselves and all that they represent.

It appears to have been the land question which especially aroused the divine anger of Micah. As we have seen, the original state of affairs was that the whole land was the common property of the clan and was used as pasture. The growth of agriculture and viticulture introduced private property in land—the whole miserable story of Naboth arose over the possession of a vineyard. But the great mass of the land was still uncultivated and was commonage. We gather from Micah and Isaiah that the vice of enclosing the commonage broke out in Judah in the latter part of the eighth century. The object of the

nobles was not mere greedy acquisitiveness. As in other times and places they required a revenue on which to keep up their palaces in the capital. It was another example of the shady side of progress. Micah appealed to the Order to support him in his attack on the rapacity of the nobles, but he was himself the last of the old prophets, exponents of pastoral life, and he found himself alone.

As a last desperate resource he undertook a journey to the hated Jerusalem to denounce the nobles for their cruelty and the prophets for their supine complaisance. After the fashion of the time he found a ready audience. The "men of God" were almost always listened to, however they might afterwards be attacked. In the temple court surrounded by the nobles and the prophets he delivered his impassioned indictment, heaping up an absolutely furious invective. The nobles are cannibals; the prophets are like wild beasts whose mouths must be stopped with food; the walls of Jerusalem are cemented with blood.

"Therefore for your sake shall Zion be ploughed as a field
And Jerusalem shall be mere heaps,
And the mountain of the House a rising ground in a wild
wood."

He can hardly have hoped to escape martyrdom even if he wished to do so. He must have expected that the haughty nobles and angry prophets would immediately order the execution of the insolent

peasant. But nothing of the sort happened. Jeremiah tells the story. "*Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah put him at all to death? Did the king not fear Yahweh and seek the face of Yahweh? And Yahweh repented of the evil which he had pronounced against them.*"

It is the greatest sermon on record ; it is one of the most glorious incidents in history. It ought to have convinced even the preacher that "cities" were not built simply to be destroyed by God.

The reception of Micah's sermon shows us why, not his writings only, but also those of Amos and Hosea, have been preserved—because they were appreciated by the men to whom they were addressed. Great prophets might make themselves unpopular—they almost glory in the fact—but their words went home. Instead of being an age of "moral decay" and "spiritual decadence" the eighth and seventh centuries were the exact reverse. They were the age in which ethical principles were first clearly enunciated, and they were the age in which men set themselves to carry these principles into practice. Nothing can be more fantastically wrong than to regard Israel-Judah as tottering through degradation to an ignoble fall. It was the spring-time of humanity just emerging—so rapidly—from the crudeness of the old clan life. The destruction of the nation was not the digging up of an old and withered stump ; it was the breaking down

of a young and beautiful plant just bursting into blossom.

The style of Micah is a happy mean between the severe simplicity of Amos and the exuberant richness of Hosea. The "Sunset of the Prophets" is one of the gems of Hebrew literature, combining perfectly the almost irreconcilable qualities of conciseness, metaphor, and perfect clearness. It is quite untranslatable, but one may give the sense :—

"The night shall come upon you and stop your visions,
The gloom over you shall stay you from divining ;
And the sun shall set upon the prophets,
And the daylight become darkness over you.
And the seers shall be ashamed,
And the diviners put to confusion,
And they shall lay their hand on their mouth—all of them ;
Because—no answer from God."

But to assert that because Micah could write excellent Hebrew *therefore* he was not an ecstatic, is absurd on the face of it. If a man who tells us himself that he walked about naked, howling like a jackal, was not an ecstatic, it is hard to say what degree of "ecstasy" the critics require.

Amos, Hosea, and Micah form a splendid triad, a potent factor in the world's history. They were not profound thinkers, they were not even clear thinkers ; for while the subject of their invective is individual, private sin, they still lay the guilt collectively on Israel as a whole. They entirely failed to

grasp the whole political and social movement of their time in Israel. Their remedy for evils was a return to a golden age as imaginary as that of Rousseau. We wrong them almost as much as we wrong their contemporaries when we seek to invent a vast gulf separating them from their nation and their Order.

They had a strange presentiment, not easily explicable, of the magnitude of the coming trouble due to the Assyrian expansion. This was certainly not based on knowledge or reasoning, and must remain as an obscure psychical phenomenon. In their hands it formed the lever by which they moved public opinion in the direction they desired.

Their strength lies in their intense, passionate hatred of vice as the negation of religion. To Amos the great offence is judicial corruption, to Hosea sensuality, to Micah rapacity, and they have together so woven religion and morality into one perfect whole that they can never be divided. They lived in an age when individualism was first coming clearly into play, and neglecting all aspects of it except that which was evil, they inveighed against it with an enthusiasm amounting to ferocity. The great thing is that in the moral sphere they were successful. Practice of course always falls far short of the teaching of the moralists, but Israel recognised in a way no other ancient nation did, that their

religion and their national existence were bound up with man's duty to his neighbour. It remained for a greater than any of these three to take their teaching and unite it with the trend of national development.

CHAPTER XV

CULTUS IN JUDAH

THE downfall of so many Western peoples drove the survivors to their prayers. Jerusalem especially, while the Syrian and the Philistine cities were falling one by one, became *δεισιδαίμων* to such a degree that the students of her history have supposed that worship was the main interest of her people, and have, moreover, read this back into the previous history both of Judah and Israel—with disastrous results. Even when we consider the hour of her most passionate religious devotion, we must never forget that cultus can supply the business of life only to priests. But certainly under King Ahaz religion became a matter of greater importance than ever before.

A definite rift now appears in the religious solidarity of Judah. On the one hand, the prophetic religion and the enlightened Yahweh-worship of the intellectual classes draw closely together; on the other, the primitive Yahweh-Baal cult allies itself with imported forms of worship.

Both forms of religion were patriotic, and both parties believed themselves to be the representatives of the ancient religion. Gradually Jerusalem became more and more identified with the higher worship, and the country districts with the lower and polytheistic form. But the division was never complete, and the kings notably varied from one to the other. Ahaz and Manasseh held with the popular worship; Hezekiah and Josiah with the aristocratic and prophetic form.

It must ever be borne in mind that in both forms of religion the primitive clan-god system is trying to adapt itself to the conditions of a changing time.

The popular religion threw itself into the worship of Yahweh with intense devotion, reviving especially the invocations of Baal ("husband") and Melek ("king"). The prophet Hosea had forbidden the use of the former, and had no doubt been obeyed by the Order, especially as it had never been popular with them. It is extremely unlikely that it had been disused by the people generally, but now more than ever the shrines rang from morning to noon, and from noon to evening, with the impassioned cry, "Baal, answer us!" Apart from Hosea's hatred of the shrines, the use or disuse of the term had little significance except as suggesting a *local* deity, since the same prophet had reinforced the main aspect of Baal doctrine under another name for Husband.

It was somewhat different with the invocation of Yahweh as Melek, for this was the name under which human sacrifices were offered. The use of the term shows how much of the ritual vocabulary of Canaan had been adopted by Israel. There is no reason to doubt that human sacrifice had formed a large element in primitive desert Yahwism, when the name Melek was impossible. But after the settlement the Canaanite invocation was employed in the performance of the old rite. In the time of prosperity and growing civilisation the rite of human sacrifice had fallen into desuetude as applied to clansmen; even towards enemies it tended to die out. Ahab was censured by the prophets for neglecting it. It must therefore have been from the party of culture that the prophets learned their dislike of Melek; just as the reverse was the case with the name Baal. In the terror of the Assyrian invasions, kings and people revived the half-forgotten rite, and in Tophet, outside Jerusalem, Yahweh-Melek was worshipped with the sacrifice of children even of royal birth.

The number of idols, *i.e.* images of Yahweh, both public and private, was enormously increased. Men had a greater sense of security in this visible presence of their god.

But popular Yahwism even in the extreme form of human sacrifice was not satisfying. The thought expressed in the words attributed to the Assyrian general must have been gnawing at the heart of

every Judahite: "*Has any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad?*" And then a little later the still worse question: "*Has Yahweh delivered Samaria?*" The fall of the cities had proved the incapacity of their gods to resist the terrible gods of Assyria. Rimmon and Melkart had no doubt done their best for Damascus and Tyre, but the destruction of their sanctuaries had proved that they were too weak to oppose Asshur. Something more was wanted than a local god, some deity of wider power and more exalted state than the baal of the land.

The want was supplied by the worship of the heavenly bodies.

There is no evidence that sun and star worship is a common primitive form. The great Sun Myth, which not many years ago threatened to reduce to chaos the young science of Comparative Religion, has been relegated to the intellectual scrap-heap, except for a few cases, and those not obviously primitive. There is apparently no reason why, in totemistic religion, primitive man should not be brother of a star as easily as brother of wolves or onions or running water; but, as a fact, celestial worship is not a common factor in primitive religions. The oft-repeated assertion that "Baal" was connected with the Sun, requires much stronger proof than has hitherto been adduced.

That star worship came from Assyria is more than probable, but it was a denationalised cult in Judah. If the Queen of Heaven (the planet Venus?) was first an Assyrian goddess and then a Judahite goddess, it was not *quâ* Assyrian that her worship prevailed in the latter country. The attraction of the worship of the heavenly bodies in an era of convulsion is to be traced to their universal, non-national position. They were a refuge for the faith which the ineffective terrestrial deities had failed to justify. They were outside of the power even of Assyria. The religious sentiment which was rudely torn from local, limited deities, found a better object in those strange living beings (as they seemed) which belonged to all countries and to none.

How far star worship prevailed in Samaria just before its fall we cannot say. Hosea does not mention it; Amos only in one difficult passage, probably an interpolation. The writer of the *Kings* refers to it, but only in a very vague way; and he is a bad authority. One hopes that Samaria remained faithful to Yahweh. The worship of Yahweh was always more exclusive and general there than in Judah, and one would gladly believe that when the last crisis came, no foreign superstitions had forced a way into the stronghold of crude but genuine Yahwism.

Judah had always hung somewhat lightly to the worship of Yahweh—a divine name probably not

known there till David's day. Even as late as Amos the numen of Beersheba was probably invoked as Dôd, though formally identified with Yahweh. The separatism of the shrines was greater in Judah than in Israel; the baals had more distinction from each other. Hence the introduction of novel cults was easier than in the North, for while in Israel "monolatry" (as some call it) was reached naturally and nationally, in Judah it was a theological proposition derived from reflection and established in the face of opposition.

Ahaz erected "steps," connected with sun worship, in which the position of the shadow played some part. No doubt the astronomical calculations were derived from Assyria. More curious are the chariots and horses which the kings dedicated to the sun. The Queen of Heaven was worshipped by the women, with cakes and libations, on the house-tops. Incense was offered to all the "Host of Heaven."

The accession of Hezekiah meant the triumph of the other party, though it is impossible to say what were the exact details of Hezekiah's "reformation."

The only thing that we know for certain is that he destroyed the great image of Yahweh, in the form of a serpent, which had stood in the Jerusalem temple. Of the history of the image we know nothing, nor do we know whether it was the principal object of worship in the shrine. Tradition referred it to Moses.

From this we may infer perhaps a general hostility to "idols" and a willingness to accept the condemnation passed on them by Hosea. With less certainty we may conjecture an hostility to the star-cult.

The reform produced by the preaching of Micah was probably social rather than ceremonial.

CHAPTER XVI

ISAIAH OF JERUSALEM

THERE is a grandeur about the name of Isaiah which implies the recognition by Bible readers in every age that in him not only Hebrew prophecy, but ancient Israel as a whole, reached the highest point of its development.

With that verdict the student must agree, although disposed to rank almost on the same level the prophet whose work though different was of equal importance—Jeremiah.

Isaiah is the prophet of birth; Jeremiah the prophet of death. Isaiah calls the soul into being; Jeremiah sets it free from the perishing tenement in which it was enshrined.

Isaiah ben Amoz received his call in the last year of the reign of Uzziah. The vision was that of Yahweh in the heavenly palace, seated on a throne and surrounded by seraphim. What seraphim are we do not know. They had six wings and also feet and hands, but these details are reconcilable with the

form either of a man or a dragon. The seraphim are not mentioned elsewhere by name, though perhaps they are the same as the cherubim. The message Isaiah was commissioned to deliver to Judah was the familiar prophetic warning of a coming disaster, but this was accompanied by the announcement that part of the nation would survive. The probable date of Isaiah's call is 740 B.C., and for the next forty years he exercised his vocation in Jerusalem, probably residing in the prophet's quarter of the sacred enclosure.

In spirit Isaiah is the pupil of Hosea, but in form he more closely resembles Amos. Thus in the sphere of morals the principal vice is injustice in the law-courts and the grinding of the poor generally. He follows Hosea in condemning drunkenness as a leading form of evil, but has nothing to say about adultery or fornication; indeed in one curious passage he appears still to regard the profession of a harlot in the old-fashioned way as a respectable vocation. Seeing that Isaiah was the leading Jerusalem prophet in Hezekiah's reign we can hardly escape the conclusion that he was included in Micah's invective. As an inhabitant of the city he probably was unaware of the condition of the country districts until the celebrated sermon opened his eyes. To the influence of the peasant-prophet we may therefore attribute Isaiah's denunciation beginning:—

“Woe unto them that join house to house.”

In regard to cultus Isaiah again follows Amos not Hosea. He even recedes somewhat from the position of the former. Yahweh refuses the sacrifices of wicked men, and animal sacrifice generally is referred to contemptuously. But there is no suggestion that the worship is directed to other deities than Yahweh or that it constitutes a national apostasy. And cultus is even alluded to with approbation in other passages. This will be discussed later.

Amos had assumed that Yahweh was the god of all nations, and had addressed rebukes to neighbouring states. Isaiah pronounces elaborate prophecies regarding them, though here he is not apparently innovating, as he tells us that the prophecy on Moab is a new edition of an old word of Yahweh. We have no means of knowing for the most part how he published these vaticinations in the countries round, as he was no traveller like Elisha, but it is surely absurd to regard them as mere rhetorical exercises or indirect instructions for Judah. The word of Yahweh by the hand of the prophet was still far too practical for literary productions of that sort. The prophecy relating to Ethiopia appears to have been delivered to (as it was occasioned by) the ambassadors from that country then present in Jerusalem.

Isaiah advances beyond the position of Amos in looking forward to the time when the whole world will acknowledge Yahweh as God, and receive his blessing :—

“ Blessed be Egypt my people,
And Assyria the work of my hands,
And Israel mine inheritance.”

The cultus will show the recognition of Yahweh by these nations, and there will be an altar and a pillar erected to him in Egypt. Here we see how fundamentally Isaiah differed from Hosea.

Isaiah's polemic against “idols,” *i.e.* images of Yahweh, requires some explanation. Hosea, of course, had condemned them in no measured terms. He had insultingly suggested that the “Calf” might be of some use to the country if it was sent as part of the tribute to Assyria. But then to Hosea the whole cultus was “the enemy”; not so, as we see, to Isaiah.

There can be no doubt that the number of these images had recently increased very rapidly. “Their land is full of idols,” the prophet exclaims in a passage complaining of novelties. It is apparently the images in private houses that he dislikes most; though it must have been with his approval that Hezekiah removed the Yahweh-Serpent from the Temple at Jerusalem.

The key is perhaps to be found in Hezekiah's prayer, which, though unhistorical in form, seems to represent clearly enough the spirit of the enlightened party in Jerusalem. The other cities had gone down one by one, in spite of their passionate entreaties to their idol-gods. When the crash came, these gods

perished in the fire, or were flung aside like useless lumber, except where the victors preferred to carry them away. If Yahweh were but an idol-god like Rimmon there was nothing to save Jerusalem. But these men had a profound belief in Yahweh as the living god, the god of all the earth, and hence the idol became a mere travesty. It was a foolish no-god. It only obscured the real ground of Israel's faith. To hope for security because your own fingers have carved a wooden block is worse than wicked, it is grotesque.

We are now ready to discuss the great "merit" of Isaiah, his relation to the politico-social movement of the time. We have seen that to Amos, Hosea, and Micah the cities were abominable; the golden age of the past was the (imaginary) life of the desert, that of the future a time of simple pastoral and agricultural existence.

All this is changed in Isaiah. Himself a citizen of Jerusalem, he sees that the promise of the future lies there, not in the country.

He has lost all longings for the desert. The epoch in the past, where all things were well, has suddenly become the reign of David in the city of Jerusalem. This change is most significant, though of course, historically, the new Eden is almost as inaccurate as the desert dream of the earlier prophets. In early days men instinctively think of things in the concrete, everything appeals to them

as an actual, not a possible, existence. Hence the ideal life of the nation which existed only in the mind of the prophet inevitably expressed itself even to him as a *past*, from which the present had deteriorated.

“ How is the faithful city become an harlot !
It was full of judgment ;
Righteousness lodged in it ;
But now—murderers.”

The faithful city, the dwelling-place of judgment and righteousness, is, of course, just as much an unconscious historic fiction as the passionate espousals of Israel in the desert, of which Hosea speaks. In each case it is a mental picture projected on an imaginary past.

But further. Neither Hosea nor Isaiah was capable of creating (any more than any other man) pictures dissociated from actual life : neither a really brutal peasantry nor a wholly degraded city would have stimulated the prophetic thought. It was just because there was so much good in Israel that the prophets were able to picture to themselves a situation in which the element of good was wholly triumphant.

Country and city are both condemned by their own best efforts and results ; these suggested what *might* be the universal rule. An age of inspiring moralists, as distinguished from cynical satirists, is a hopeful age, nay, an age of achievement, for it

itself brings grist to the moralists' mill. It shows what it can accomplish as well as what it has not accomplished.

The significance of Isaiah's new Golden Age then lies in his appreciation of the city as the proper home of judgment and righteousness, in exact opposition to Micah.

The same thought expresses itself in the picture of the future :—

“ I will restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
Afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteousness,
The Faithful City.”

Micah regarded Jerusalem as cemented with blood. Isaiah says :—

“ Behold, I lay in Zion a stone,
A stone proved, a precious corner-stone for a well-founded
foundation.

Judgment also will I lay to the line,
And righteousness to the plummet.”

Both prophets alike condemn the moral evils of the time, but Micah sees in the city the root of the evil, while Isaiah recognises in it the promise of the coming good.

Israel not as a mob but as an organised orderly city is the thought of the prophet. He recites the names of the various official classes in Jerusalem, and describes them as “ *the stay and the staff, the whole*

stay of bread and the whole stay of water." And it is to the governing class that he looks with hope:—

“ Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness
And nobles shall rule in judgment.”

The actual city, indeed, to the prophet corresponds but little to the ideal city. Her silver is dross and her wine mixed with water. She is a vineyard that brings forth only wild grapes. The anger of Yahweh is towards her.

For all this a great purgation is necessary. There will be a period of great misery. “ The day of Yahweh ” (Isaiah borrows the phrase from Amos) will be upon everything that is high and exalted. The prophet gives no clear picture of this great judgment. He speaks of captivity and a land left uncultivated, but without precision. These are apparently figures borrowed from the fate of the other nations, but not strictly applied to Judah.

The upper classes will feel the distress most acutely. And here it must be noted that, city-lover as he was, Isaiah inveighs against luxury in the spirit of the older prophets. He condemns the profusion of silver and gold, and in a quaint passage censures the elaborate toilet of the great ladies of Jerusalem with a particularity which would be almost amusing if we had any means of determining what most of the articles were. But the prophet is himself in terrible earnest when he assures his

hearers that the time is coming when the expensive costumes will give place to a piece of sackcloth and a cord.

Jerusalem itself is inviolable ; it cannot be taken. Yahweh will preserve it, hovering over it like a bird over its nest.

“ Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities.
Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,
A tent that shall not be taken down.
Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed,
Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”

Even when the whole land was covered with the Assyrian army and the city itself besieged, the prophet does not lose his confidence for a moment. The word of Yahweh to Sennacherib is :—

“ The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, laughed thee to scorn ;
The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.”

Yahweh, says Isaiah, will defend Jerusalem for his own sake and for the sake of David (*i.e.* that ideal which she represents).

Yet this protection will not extend to all the people ; the sinners will perish in the day of calamity. Here we get Isaiah's famous doctrine of the “ Remnant.” It was a novelty, and he impressed it on the minds of the people by naming his eldest son *Shear-Jashub*, *i.e.* “ a remnant shall return.” Hitherto the nation had been a unity before Yahweh in the eyes of his prophets. Isaiah now discrimin-

ates between those whom Yahweh will preserve and those who will perish. It is individualism beginning to extend even into the sphere of religion, and, as we should naturally expect, we find it first in the writings of the prophet of city life.

It is this remnant which will realise the ideal. The time will be one of peace.

“ The people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem ;
 Thou shalt weep no more ;
 He will be very gracious to thee at the sound of thy cry
 When he shall hear it ; he will answer thee.”

In a strange picture he shows us the future city protected by Yahweh, but it is difficult to say how far it is to be interpreted literally :—

“ And Yahweh will create on every dwelling of Mount Zion
 and upon her assemblies
 A cloud by day, and smoke ;
 And the gleaming of fire for light by night,
 For over all the glory shall be a canopy.
 And there shall be a pavilion for shade by day from heat,
 And for a refuge and for a protection from storm and from
 rain.”

It is an extremely interesting passage in several ways.

But the most striking thought is, that every one that is written down “for life” in Jerusalem will be *kodesh*—dedicated to Yahweh. Here we get the first introduction of the sense of “holy” into the old ritual term. It arises from the insistence of the prophets that Yahweh himself is “the *kodesh* One.”

With the higher views of the Godhead the term *kodesh* takes quite a new meaning, and every man in the "kodesh mountain" is himself to be *kodesh*.

Thus Isaiah breathed a living soul into the growing organism of the city of Jerusalem ; he made her conscious of a destiny which lay before her. All round the Mediterranean the cities were springing into existence, and going through domestic history on strangely similar lines. Most of them achieved success of a sort. They trained free citizens, they developed art and letters, they brought a new sense of the nobility of man into the world, they faced the problems of life and science, they eclipsed the fame of the dreary Empires. But to a large extent, in Browning's phrase, they spent what they earned. Beyond a vague tradition of freedom and capacity, they left little direct heritage for the future. With a few it was otherwise, and among these we must record Jerusalem. A master-mind held before her such a glowing presentment of the ideal which to him she only feebly expressed, that she accepted that as the destiny God had given her to accomplish. Just as Athens and Rome became self-conscious, so did Jerusalem. But in some sense hers was the most glorious consciousness of all, for she saw herself as "the holy city," the place chosen by the Divine Power in which to set forth righteousness and purity and truth. Towards that high ideal every one that was best in her set his face, and however halting and

feeble was her success in revealing the kingdom of God among men, yet the very effort marks her out through all the ages as being, in the language of her own poet, "the joy of the whole earth."

Yet the oft-repeated caution must be given again here. Because a city becomes conscious of a certain destiny, it does not cease to be a city and become a mere phantom. Men ate and drank, bought and sold, married and died, after the days of Isaiah just as much as they did before. "Righteousness" no more took the place of bread-and-butter in ancient Jerusalem than "Imperialism" does in modern London.

The great teaching of Isaiah on the subject of *Messiah* or the Divine King presents little difficulty when viewed in its historic setting.

The first notice is during the Syro-Ephraimitish War when Yahweh gives Ahaz a sign:—

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."

At first sight this appears to be a clear prophecy of the events recorded in S. Luke's Gospel, but when we consider (1) that the more obvious meaning of the "virgin" phraseology is (not that there will be a Virgin Mother but) that she who is now a virgin will then be a mother; (2) that Immanuel is not "God with us," but the sentence "God is with us"; and (3) that the prophecy took place about 730 B.C., and

that therefore the promise that both kings would be dead in Immanuel's time would be hardly *ad rem*,—we are forced to conclude that the primary meaning of the words was not with reference to our Lord.

That Immanuel was neither the prophet's second son (born soon after), nor simply the child of "any marriageable woman," is evident from the fact that Isaiah speaks a little later of "*thy land, O Immanuel.*"

Immanuel is undoubtedly a coming king, most probably of the House of David.

Yet as the prophet proceeds he soon gets beyond the limits of mere humanity :—

"Unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given ;
And the government shall be upon his shoulder :
And his name shall be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, the Mighty God,
The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

We may scrutinise the Hebrew text and seek to minimise the meaning of the words as far as possible, yet it remains that some one outside the ordinary children of men is being described.

Isaiah was familiar only with Salomonic monarchy, and his ideal was still the autocratic king reigning in Jerusalem. The king was absolute in theory, the father and shepherd of his people.

To a loyal Israelite the king was all that was best in the nation, raised to a higher power, as the

mathematicians say. He was the "breath of our nostrils," the source of all justice, the example of all righteousness.

When, therefore, in Isaiah's imagination of the future the city becomes more and more perfect, the king attains an elevation outside of all possible experience. If every one in Jerusalem is *kodesh*—godlike, Isaiah means—what must the king be? No mere man could possibly be king of Isaiah's City-state.

This is obvious, because in a later picture Isaiah describes the future State in language which completely leaves the plane of the actual. "*The land shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.*" This is not only to apply to the human inhabitants, but beasts of prey are to change their habits: "*the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*" Here again we have a glowing picture of the coming king with the spirit of Yahweh resting on him.

The Messiah stands to the ideal city as Hezekiah (or David) to the actual city. A perfect city involves a superhuman king.

The prophecy was not fulfilled in the way Isaiah expected. He had announced Messiah—history answered with Manasseh. But the end was not yet.

Isaiah's doctrine of the inviolable city has brought on him the charge of lack of spiritual insight compared with Amos or Hosea, but no accusation could

well be more absurd. The revelation of the Divine in that day was in the growing city life, and it is Isaiah's crowning praise that he saw it. Of course his revelation did not extend beyond a certain limit. He conceived of the Mediterranean City-state as the final expression of God's dealings with men. Every one now knows that therein he was mistaken, but his teaching was a vast advance on that of his predecessors. In the same way his appreciation of cultus was not a falling back into error, it was a perception of the important place the shrine played in the city life. He calls Jerusalem "*the city of our solemnities, i.e. sacred meetings.*" He saw instinctively, and in spite of prophetic prepossessions, the value of the inhabitants coming together before Yahweh their god. The joy of the city finds its fullest expression in the great festivals:—

“The song shall be for you
As the night when the feast is consecrated,
And joy of heart as a man going with a flute
To come into the mountain of Yahweh to the Rock of
Israel.”

CHAPTER XVII

MANASSEH BEN HEZEKIAH

AT the time of King Hezekiah's death the two parties of which we have spoken were clearly marked and in definite opposition to each other.

On the one hand there was the party to which Hezekiah himself belonged as well as the prophet Isaiah. On the other hand was the popular party.

Isaiah's party was formed by the fusion of the prophets with the cultured section of the nation ; and each of these had learnt something from the other. The prophets had lost their ferocity, their love of war and human sacrifice ; the cultured class had gained in moral earnestness.

It was numerically the smaller party, and was for the most part to be found in Jerusalem. But what it lacked in numbers and distribution it made up for in weight and definiteness of aim. "Aristocratic" it was in the best sense, being composed of nobles, priests, and prophets, though of course we are not to suppose that all the members of the upper classes

and religious Orders in Jerusalem belonged to it by any means. The aim of the party was to make Jerusalem a powerful, well-ordered, God-fearing city.

When we try to reduce to writing the policy, the "program," of the party as instructed by Isaiah, we naturally place first the unique position of Yahweh, and secondly the abolition of idols; and it immediately occurs to us that we are writing down the celebrated "Ten Commandments." This is the most probable origin that can be suggested for the great Code.

The original document apparently consisted of ten short commandments, the longer form of several, as we now have them, being due to later expansions:—

"I am Yahweh thy God.

- I. There shall not be for thee other gods beside me.
- II. Thou shalt not make a carved image.
- III. Thou shalt not lift up the name of Yahweh thy god to no purpose.
- IV. Remember to keep kodesh the day Shabbath.
- V. Pay respect to thy father and thy mother.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not give false evidence against thy neighbour.
- X. Thou shalt not covet that which is thy neighbour's."

In the first "word" the phrase *beside me* perhaps signifies rather, *in my despite, in derogation of my honour*. The *pesel* or idol of the second is, of course, primarily an image of Yahweh.

The third commandment is in some ways the most

striking of all. It points to the seriousness in which all official classes were to discharge their functions. It was directed perhaps primarily towards the prophets, one of whose technical words was the "burden" or thing lifted up, from the same root as the verb here used.

The fourth commandment is in the interests of humanity, as the expansion in the Deuteronomic form indicates. It is true, as has sometimes been pointed out, that it cannot date from the desert, as a nomad requires no "rest." But neither can it date from a pastoral-agricultural life, for there also it is both almost unnecessary and very difficult to enforce. A weekly rest would surely never *occur* to a farmer or his men. We know how difficult it is to observe Sunday in harvest-time in England. The Sabbath is the product of *city* life, where work goes on without regard to season. It was not designed primarily for worship, and it illustrates (what we are so apt to forget) the intimate connection, indeed the identity, of early religious and social ideas. The obvious, if not the only, way to give a holiday was to make the day *kodesh*.

The fifth word is highly interesting as revealing the growing individualism. The old *patria potestas* was breaking down, and the commandment seeks to substitute a moral and voluntary relationship.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments are an epitome of the teaching of Hosea; the ninth

is the great lesson of Amos ; and the tenth is from Micah.

I have paraphrased the word "house" in the last commandment. It would be rendered most nearly by our somewhat grandiose word "establishment." It means the entire group of persons and things of which "thy neighbour" is the legal head. There is no indignity intended to the *Mater familias* when she is included in this category, though the expression was felt very early to be unfortunate, and it is altered in the Deuteronomic recension, not without injury to the clearness of the idea.

Surprise has been expressed that one sin "of the heart" should be included among sins of act. But the point aimed at is a general condemnation of abuse of power and wealth which it would not be easy to express otherwise, and the very impossibility of convicting a man of "coveting," points to the real bearing of the whole collection.

Egyptologists and Assyriologists are apt to be somewhat scornful towards those who still regard the Ten Commandments as an epoch-making document and one of the foundation-stones of society. They point to similar laws of the Empires thousands of years older than Hezekiah, or even the traditional lawgiver Moses, and ask not without a triumphant smile, "Where are your Ten Commandments now?"

To this we may reply, that it did not require the discovery of these laws of the Empires to assure us

of their existence. A moment's reflection shows that every settled government must take steps to assure the safety of life and property. It is its very *raison d'être*. The sixth and eighth commandments must certainly have found a place in the Penal Codes of the Aztecs and the Hittites.

The great Code of Hammurabi of Babylon (2250 B.C.), the discovery of which has shed such splendour on Assyriology, consists of more than 250 sections. These might all be divided into two classes. The first would contain the laws relating to property and business, regulating all such matters as landlord and tenant, doctors' fees, the hire of ships, etc. The second class would form a penal code, each section mentioning the punishment for a crime. Hammurabi's Code is, without doubt, the ultimate source of many of the laws contained in Scripture, but it stands in no direct relation to the Decalogue, which is a list not of laws but of duties.

The real importance of the Ten Words lies in the position they hold. Whether they were given by Moses to the wandering desert-league or are the political program of Isaiah's party,—the City-state coming to a consciousness of its own meaning—they are not excerpts from Criminal Law; they are the foundation of the State, the basis on which it rests, the connection between the visible State and the Unseen Guardian through whom it exists; they are the nexus which binds the scattered individuals and the

god of the State; in a word, they are the State itself as distinguished from its mere component parts.

We may restate the Ten Words in the language of to-day:— PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS REGARDED AS A DUTY TO THE DIVINELY ORDAINED STATE IS THE BASIS OF CIVILISED SOCIETY.

Now that we have removed the old Words from our English Churches, it might not be amiss to display some such paraphrase in their place.

It seems to be not improbable that our Reformers were following a genuine historic instinct when they introduced the law about painting the Commandments on the Church wall. They are obviously designed in their short form for carving on stone. Quite possibly Hezekiah or Josiah carved them on some prominent place in the sacred enclosure. If so, we can easily understand how the tradition, believing them to be Mosaic, would confuse the stone on which they were carved with the stone carried about in the kodesh Ark during the nomadic period.

With the accession of *Manasseh ben Hezekiah* the inevitable reaction occurred, and the popular religion was restored together with the cultus of the host of heaven.

But there was a difference. The old cruelties and indecencies had been spontaneous, natural, and unselfconscious. The moment the higher aspect of religion had been opposed to the lower, that lower

stood condemned, and those who flung themselves into it, pleading the custom of their forefathers, were really sinning in the face of light. Once man has tasted of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he can never return to the nakedness of innocence.

Neither Hezekiah nor Manasseh was really standing in the old paths, though each believed himself to be the exponent of traditional religion. Manasseh was in form less of an innovator—if we are right in believing that in Judah polytheism was fairly prevalent always; but Hezekiah represented a higher line of development. Manasseh's traditionalism consisted in reviving and multiplying all the ritual practices which Judah had grown out of through the influence of culture on one hand and moral earnestness on the other.

During Manasseh's long reign, extending over more than half a century, Judah was outwardly peaceful, as the tributary of Assyria. Inwardly, however, it was full of dissension. The king filled Jerusalem with innocent blood "from mouth to mouth." Josephus is no doubt right in understanding the blood of the prophets, *i.e.* the party of Isaiah generally, as being referred to, but we may well question if that exhausts the meaning. Jerusalem alone, not Judah as a whole, is spoken of, and the blood shed is carefully distinguished from the idolatry. We may infer that politics as well as religion furnished motives for the slaughter, but in

any case Manasseh is the exact reverse of Messiah ; he is the tyrant whose acts begin to reveal the great secret that the antique kingship is an anomaly and an anachronism in the city-state.

No doubt the prophets denounced the king in their usual fearless fashion, and were rewarded with death. Critics have invented elaborate theories to account for the apparent cessation of prophecy during Manasseh's reign, but the matter requires no theory at all. Manasseh and the dominant faction refused to listen. The Book of Isaiah, for example, represents the distilled product of hundreds of discourses delivered to a sympathetic audience. Prophecy was still far too *actual* to be composed privately in a study.

We have, indeed, one splendid though brief prophecy dating from Manasseh's reign, and now included in the Book of Micah. It is directed against the senseless multiplication of sacrifices and the prevalent offering of children by fire to Yahweh-Melek.

“Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh,
And bow myself before the exalted god ?
Shall I come before him with holocausts of yearling calves ?
Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams and untold
rivers of oil ?
Shall I give my first-born as my transgression,
The fruit of my body as the sin of my soul ?
He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ;
And what doth Yahweh require of thee,
But to do justice, and to love compassion, and to humble
thyself in walking with Yahweh ?”

Prophecy, denied for the most part its proper vocation, took refuge in literature, indeed, but in the compilation of religious romances. Taking old names, the writers wove round them narratives in which the circumstances of their own time were but slightly concealed, and their faith and hope were strengthened by thus throwing into the past the record of present struggles. The two-fold theme is the faithful worshipper of Yahweh in a faithless generation, and the ultimate triumph of the friends of God.

The most famous of these romances is that splendid example of Hebrew prose—*Elijah the Tishbite*.

Elijah was, as we have seen, a historical character—the great prophet of the reign of Ahab, on whom he pronounced the terrific prophetic curse for the murder of Naboth. Besides that matter he had another grievance against the king, viz. the erection in Samaria of a shrine for Melkart of Tyre, the god of Queen Jezebel. This was, of course, nothing more than Solomon had done, practically without offence, in Jerusalem, and the shrines were still standing there in Ahab's day. But Yahwism in Israel was a very different thing from Yahwism in Judah, and Joram the son of Ahab abolished the temple of the Tyrian Baal erected by his father. The matter, however, had never been one of first importance, and does not figure

largely, if at all, in the genuine Northern documents.

It is, in fact, quite impossible to fit the great Baal controversy as we now have it into the history or literature of the North. Ahab was a zealous worshipper of Yahweh, and was for the most part on excellent terms with the prophets. The twelve stones "according to the number of the tribes," and the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel," did not come from a Northern pen.

But the moment we read Manasseh for Ahab the whole thing becomes plain. The story is an allegory. Elijah is typical of the prophetic party in the seventh century. The national apostasy is not the almost incredible desertion of Yahweh of Samaria for Melkart of Tyre, but the apostasy described by Hosea—it is the invocation of Yahweh under the name Baal. The four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal are the prophets who held to the popular party in Jerusalem. Their slaughter takes place on paper only. The seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal are the party of Isaiah.

Notice especially the splendid individualism: we have here for the first time Yahweh dealing with the individual soul. It was the great work of the city-states that they trained men to think for themselves; and in Jerusalem that meant a new factor in the world's history—personal religion, not of the king but of the citizen.

Later hands, still in the reign of Manasseh, made additions to the Elijah story. They are to the same effect but much poorer in workmanship. One describes how Jehu slew all the worshippers of Baal. The narrative as it stands is full of improbabilities, but as a romance of Manasseh's time it is perfectly intelligible. Again, another writer relates how Elijah called down fire from heaven and burnt up the soldiers whom Ahaziah had sent to arrest him. It is easy to criticise the morality of the story, but its real inwardness is to encourage the persecuted, by teaching them that Heaven is not on the side of the wicked king.

To the same period we must ascribe parts of the *Abraham* story as we now have it. To the old folk-tale of the destruction of Sodom was prefixed the exquisite "intercession" of Abraham. The point is obvious when we remember that Isaiah himself had called Jerusalem Sodom. It is to encourage the "remnant" by showing them that for their sakes Yahweh will preserve the city. Note here again in striking form the great doctrine that personal morality was the very condition of the city's life. From the "Elohists" sections of the book of Genesis comes an even more vivid narrative. In the old tradition Abraham had apparently sacrificed a son. The writer in Manasseh's reign, dealing as freely with the legend as Euripides with a Greek saga, gives us the beautiful story of the

substitution of the ram, and in this way deals a blow at the prevailing child-sacrifice.

Thus did the spiritually minded comfort one another during the long and brutal reign of Manasseh.

CHAPTER XVIII

ZEPHANIAH

MANASSEH died in 697 B.C., and was succeeded by Amon his son. In matters religious Amon followed the policy of his father, but he quarrelled with the bureau, who assassinated him after a reign of only two years. There is some reason to think that an attempt was made by the assassins to place a foreigner on the throne, but it was unsuccessful, and the "people of the land" appointed Josiah, the eight-year-old son of Amon, to succeed his father. No doubt they "cut a berth" to confirm the accession. The conspirators were put to death.

Of the first eighteen years of Josiah's reign we know little. We have the definite testimony of Zephaniah that the cultus remained unchanged, for he specifies the invocations of Baal and Melek and the worship of the stars. Who administered the government? The old bureau had all been executed. The gebirah was Jedidah from Boscath, a village on the Philistine frontier, but there is little

evidence to show what part she took. Zephaniah, who was himself of royal blood, apparently passes condemnation upon her in the phrase "the king's sons." Josiah was married while still very young (as indeed we should expect under the circumstances), and he had sons both by Zebudah and Hamutal before he was seventeen, but we can hardly suppose that Zephaniah is censuring children of six or seven years old. He must be using the phrase in its wide sense of the Royal Family, and of that the gebirah was the head. On the other hand, the very vagueness of the phrase indicates that she was not a woman of strong character.

The main power therefore lay, as Zephaniah indicates, in the hands of the nobles. We may be surprised that they did not use their power to effect alterations in the religion, but two considerations will help us to understand their position. (1) A Council of Regency stands in a different position from a regular government. (2) The *status quo* had now lasted for fifty-seven years, and very few of Isaiah's personal friends can have been alive. The nobles had no doubt determined that the *régime* of Manasseh must never be allowed to return, but it required the living voice of prophecy once more to indicate that politics and religion were two sides of the same question. Isaiah found a true successor in Zephaniah.

Zephaniah ben Cushi ben Gedaliah ben Amariah

ben Hezekiah (as the title of his book calls him), was one generation lower in descent from Hezekiah than the reigning King, but he was doubtless an older man. He is a typical example of the "Silver" Prophecy. The splendour of the early age has largely disappeared. The striking figures, the bold imagery, and the satisfying flow of words have passed away. But there is a compensation: he is much more connected and intelligible; he leaves far less to be supplied by imagination. He speaks less to our dreams, but more to our thoughts. This is partly because he is using ideas and phrases that have done duty more than once already in the prophetic literature. What Amos, for example, meant by the "day of Yahweh," what his contemporaries understood by it, must remain somewhat problematical. The people expected it to be "light," and the prophet assured them it would be "dark."

But *what*? A visible theophany, and Yahweh appearing in person on the mountains? We cannot say. With Isaiah, prophesying after the destruction of Samaria, the "day of Yahweh" has become synonymous with vague national disaster. When we reach Zephaniah the "day of Yahweh" is precise—a hostile invasion and a siege; "*a day of trumpet and alarm against fortified cities.*"

Zephaniah condemns, as we have said, the invocations of Baal and Melek and the worship of the stars. He threatens destruction to the *chemarim*,

an obscure variety of priests who had incurred the dislike of the reformers. A new phenomenon appears in Jerusalem, the men who say, "*Yahweh will not do good, neither will he do evil.*" These people are interesting, but what their own conviction really was we do not know. They may have been forerunners of Lucretius, they may have been crass materialists, but perhaps, after all, they were only enthusiastic star-worshippers, who regarded the old local religions as outworn superstitions. The prophet does not help us to a conclusion by calling them "curdled milk," or by intimating that Yahweh will "search Jerusalem with candles" to find them.

It has been supposed that Zephaniah was stirred by the invasion of the Scythians recorded by Herodotus. In any case, his doctrine is a reproduction of that of Isaiah. A destruction will come which will blot out the sinners, and leave an afflicted, poor, and God-fearing people in the kodesh mountain.

The feeling of the city as an existing unity, an organised whole, is even stronger than in Isaiah. Zephaniah speaks of *her* princes, *her* judges, *her* prophets, *her* priests. She is the greater whole which includes and transcends all her official classes. And the appreciation of the value of the cultus, at least of the shrine, has also grown. The priests are condemned because they have defiled the sacred enclosure.

In spite of all her faults Yahweh is in the midst

of Jerusalem. We see that the long misrule of Manasseh had strengthened rather than weakened the civic sense.

Towards the close the prophet takes a much more cheerful tone. There is no reason to suppose that the conclusion is the work of another hand. We may rather suppose that the obvious explanation is the correct one—he had found followers. He had succeeded, just as Isaiah succeeded, in enlisting the nobles on his side and making the political movement again a religious one. Jerusalem was returning to her ideal. The growth in civic life was bound up again with righteousness, and righteousness was now finally identified with the “righteous Yahweh.”

Standing on the threshold of the great Revolution, it will be well briefly to recapitulate the history which led up to it.

The hill town of “Urusalim” had remained outside the influence of Judah until it was captured by David, who made it his place of residence. As it was situated on the Northern frontier of Judah it attracted a large Benjamite population, which connected it somewhat closely in thought and temper with the Northern kingdom. The worship of Yahweh was probably, therefore, always a more genuinely popular religion in Zion than in the rest of Judah.

Under Solomon the palace and the Temple were

built, and the city became definitely and for ever the Judahite capital. The nobles gradually tended to leave their country houses and come to live in the city. Of course this movement was slow and never universal. A sense of the dignity and quiet of the country life must have detained many. We saw how Barzillai preferred to remain beside the grave of his father and mother. Exactly the same feeling is expressed by the Shunamite lady who had befriended Elisha. The prophet offered to introduce her at court in Samaria, but her reply was in the beautiful words, "*I dwell among mine own people.*"

Under Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh and Amon, Jerusalem had become more and more the focus of the nation's life. The distinction between the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem becomes marked in the literature. In Isaiah we see the citizen, and in Micah the man from the country.

The importance and attractiveness of city life had demonstrated itself. The mere joy of the great city—the buildings, the crowds, the sights, the news,—all these threw their glamour over Judah. Nor were higher influences wanting. The clash of intellect and the sense of being alive to thought were at work. In a word, the very causes operating at the present moment to draw the country folk to London were at work in Palestine 2500 years ago.

Browning has admirably satirised the weaker side of the movement in his poem *Up at a Villa—Down in the City*, but the stronger and better aspect is also visible to history.

The city had, however, as yet, no definite place in the politics of the nation. The nobles had left their estates in the country to come and live in Jerusalem, but although life there was pleasanter it had its drawbacks. In the country they were petty kings; in the city they were practically nobody. So long as the king retained his absolute position above law, and with material resources sufficient to enforce his will, Jerusalem and her nobles were powerless. Ahaz and Hezekiah had taken advice, and ruled with some regard to their subjects, but Manassch had filled Jerusalem with blood from end to end. The long minority of Josiah was coming to a close, and the time was ripe to strike.

From the religious point of view Jerusalem had at first little prestige. Amos and Hosea simply ignore its shrine as being of no account in the popular religion. But as the city became truly the capital, so the Temple—though of mushroom growth compared with Beersheba—gained in importance. The invasion of Sennacherib, who overthrew every Judahite town except Jerusalem, invested the Temple at last with the necessary religious glamour as Yahweh's only inviolable sanctuary.

Jerusalem was the home of the party which—

for want of a better name—we term the Party of Reform. In the earlier period of its growth the greater prophets had disliked and shunned it, but at length the force of attraction was too strong for them, and they joined hands with the cultured Yahweh worshippers within the city walls. Under the leadership of Zephaniah they converted to their views the great nobles by whom the revolution was carried out. The long minority of Josiah had given the nobles time to mature their plans.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SYNOECISMUS OF JUDAH

THE Deuteronomic legislation of King Josiah is so obviously in the interest of the nobles that we need not hesitate to assign it to them. The king himself is out of the question both on internal and external grounds. The common belief that the revolution was brought about by an alliance of prophets and priests is equally impossible. Their influence will be discussed later, but there is not a tittle of evidence to show that either or both of these classes had any sort of political importance commensurate with the magnitude of the undertaking. A revolution so drastic and far-reaching, falling athwart of vested interests in every direction, could only be undertaken by the supreme power of the moment working desperately for its own hand. Those who believe in the prophet-and-priest theory have entirely forgotten that Jerusalem was a flesh-and-blood reality—it is the old error, that Jerusalem was a phantom state, blown about by the breath of “theological dogmas.”

If it be objected that much of the legislation is concerned with matters of religion, and that it cannot have been (for example) a political question whether the people might or might not eat bats, the retort is obvious, that still less has such a question got to do with spiritual religion. Ritual was *eminently* a matter of practical politics ; for the public cultus and the ritual laws were designed to secure the State by ensuring the favour of the unseen power. The correct cultus was one of the most important functions of government.

The object of the legislation as a whole was to substitute a constitutional for an absolute monarchy. It was the same problem which two and a half millenniums later faced the men of 1789. We remember Carlyle's tragi-comic picture of Astronomer Bailly "conquering his king," and how, in the event, both fared to the guillotine. The revolutionists of Jerusalem were happier.

The first step was to centralise all Judah in the capital. Before representative government had suggested itself, no unit larger than a single city with its lands could be self-governing. Every Judahite had to be made a citizen of Jerusalem, and the independent vitality of all the country towns and villages must be destroyed ; they must be reduced to the position of mere suburbs, as it were, where some of the citizens of Jerusalem lived for practical convenience.

The focus of town life was the bamah. There the priests gave torah ; there the prophets harangued the populace ; there the great crowd assembled on the feasts ; and there private reunions were held. It was the house of the deity, who, however he might be officially identified with the god of the nation, appeared at least to the less-instructed townsmen as their local and peculiar guardian.

The nobles determined, therefore, on a very daring stroke—nothing less than the *destruction of all temples and shrines outside Jerusalem*. Constructively the Jerusalem Temple was made the correct shrine for every inhabitant of the country.

The legislation, therefore, begins with the destruction of the shrines, and orders that all "*burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, heave-offerings, vows, freewill offerings, and firstlings*" are to be brought to Jerusalem. At a later point in the Code it is specified that three times every year, on the feast of Unleavened Bread, on the feast of Weeks, and on the feast of Tabernacles, every male is to appear before Yahweh.

Such a revolutionary enactment naturally entailed many consequences which had to be faced by the legislators.

Every feast, as we have seen, was also a sacrifice, and the new *régime* threatened the country folk with a journey to Jerusalem every time they wished to eat a piece of meat. This was naturally impossible,

and therefore ordinary meat-eating was declared to be distinct from sacrifice. A happy precedent was found by which, according to custom, the killing and eating of *game* was non-sacrificial. The ox and the sheep are now to be classed with the gazelle and the hart.

Regard was had to conservative feeling in the matter of *blood*. It had been most *kodesh*, and to eat it would surely be utterly profane. The law, therefore, enjoins that for the future it is not to be eaten but poured out "like water," *i.e.* without sacrificial intention.

A change was necessary also in the law for "consecrating the war." Critics dwell much on the impracticable character of the new enactment, though there is little or nothing impracticable about it. Hitherto the clan had assembled at the shrine, and the priest had made the warriors *kodesh*, apparently by sprinkling them with sacrificial blood. This ensured the presence of Yahweh in the fight, and was a protection against wounds. It is now ordered that when the warriors assemble for war (not "draw near to battle"), the priest, *i.e.* the one who would hitherto have made them *kodesh*, is to harangue them—which no doubt he had always done—and to assure them verbally, not sacramentally, that Yahweh is going out with them to the fight. The Jerusalem officials (see later) are to accept good excuses, to invite cowards to retire (this is appar-

ently a gibe), and finally to appoint local men as officers of the commandos.

In one case only was sacrifice allowed outside Jerusalem. When a man was found murdered in the country, and his murderer could not be traced, the elders of the nearest town were to sacrifice a heifer on the spot. It shows how the horror of "uncovered blood" was too deeply ingrained to be tampered with by law.

The priests of the local shrines had to be dealt with. Their presence in the country districts would have been a strong force on the side of reaction. Every effort was therefore made to bring them to Jerusalem. On the one hand they were declared to be incapable of holding landed property (thus destroying the strongest inducement to remain in the country), and on the other they were offered a maintenance at the altar of the Temple. Those who were landholders were apparently permitted to sell their inheritance and keep the proceeds, and all who elected not to come to the capital were commended over and over again to the charity of the faithful. In such a situation their political influence would be small.

The other inhabitants of the shrine, the kodesh harlots, would likewise have been a permanent danger to the new settlement, and therefore the whole system was abolished throughout the land, including the Jerusalem Temple itself.

The shrines had been the old places of Refuge where the homicide was safe from the avenger of blood, *i.e.* the relative of the man accidentally killed. Accordingly the new law set apart three *towns* in different parts of the country where the hunted man might find safety.

Slightly less drastic measures were adopted for the reconstruction of the legal system. It would obviously have been highly inconvenient to bring every petty case to Jerusalem. The old local Court of the Elders, the "gate" of the town, was therefore preserved, but its independence was destroyed by the appointment of a presiding judge. Further, a Court of Appeal consisting, not of the king but of a judge and priests, was set up in Jerusalem. The decisions of this court were not to be of mere moral weight; they were ordered to be enforced, and death was the penalty for disobedience.

Officials (already alluded to) were also appointed by the central government to control the "levy" or contribution of soldiers from each district in time of war. These officials were to decide who was to be called out, and to appoint the captains for these local regiments.

Of all this centralising we have still to describe the vital nucleus, the alteration in the position of the king. The section dealing with this is the most interesting in the whole book, and if at the first glance it appears somewhat disappointing, we must

remember that these men were doing the thing for the first time, they had no constitutional precedents.

Most important of all, in our eyes, is the great enactment that *the law is above the king*. "Regis voluntas lex suprema" vanishes. The king is to keep a copy of the law beside him, and "*to read in it all the days of his life.*" Nothing is said here about *law-making*, but we shall see presently that this inevitably passed out of the king's hands.

No foreigner is to hold the kingly office. The purpose of this law is obvious, but it is somewhat curious in a nation which for four hundred years had known but one dynasty. It suggests the conjecture that the assassins of Josiah's father had tried to place a foreigner on the throne. The king's Servants were themselves not infrequently foreigners. But there is a more likely conjecture. Who is the "stranger man" that is not thy *āch*, thy blood-kin? He is the son of the foreign princess. We have seen that these ladies did not change their kin on marriage, and it is probable that the sons were the same kin as their mother.

The king is not to "multiply horses." These are of course the horses for his standing army of chariots. With the levy reformed and placed under royal officers instead of being left to local patriotism, Judah will have a sufficient army of defence, and the questionable bodyguard (useful against others beside foreign foes) may be reduced

to a minimum. There is here another instance of how men will seek to conduct even a revolution on established principles. The horses came from Egypt, the Thessaly of the Syrian world. Now an ancient oracle of Yahweh had declared with regard to Egypt, "*Ye shall henceforth return no more that way,*" and the attendance of the royal servants at the Egyptian horse-fairs was declared to be a violation of that oracle!

The king is not to "multiply wives." In the seclusion of the harem a king becomes a slave to unworthy influences. Concubines and eunuchs usurp the place of the nobles as his advisers. And uncontrolled lust breeds fear and cruelty; no man's life is safe in the dominions of the crowned sensualist.

The king is not "greatly to multiply silver and gold." A decent state he must maintain, but his wealth must never become so great that he rules as millionaire capitalist instead of as the Lord's Anointed.

Who are the divine guardians of the State thus reorganised, the invisible citizens? The answer could hardly be doubtful—Yahweh, and Yahweh only. Whatever vitality the old local deities may still have had, they had all long since been formally identified with Yahweh. A pantheon composed of Dôd and Zedek and Shaddai and Anathoth and all the rest was inconceivable. But a more formidable set of rivals was to be found in the Star-gods, whose cult had now for a century been popular both

in town and country. The spirit of the Revolution, however, was against them. Yahweh was the national god, the god of men who believed in themselves and in their destiny. The cultus of the Star-gods was the despairing attempt of men who had been crushed for the time to reach out hands of faith to deities outside the falling social and political edifice. The nobles who compiled the Deuteronomic constitution had recovered their balance, and the State was more living and real than ever before. Yahweh was the only possible deity. Death by stoning was the penalty for worshipping any god except that of the State, and the sun and moon and stars are specially mentioned as forbidden objects of worship.

The next question in statecraft was to settle the cultus; how shall we please and satisfy the great Protecting Power? The law-makers were confronted by two rituals, both purporting to be the service which Yahweh loved.

As we have seen, the original worship of Israel in the desert was extremely simple. It consisted of the blood rite performed at a temporary altar. The victim was generally a beast, but in the hour of terror it was a clansman, and in the hour of victory a foe.

Hosea was entirely right in regarding the cultus of his day as Canaanite, and he was voicing a traditional dislike to it on the part of the prophets.

The Jerusalem prophets were not prepared to go so far as to condemn public worship *in toto*. An ancient city without a shrine would have been an impossibility. Moreover, culture had done good work, and grosser features like human sacrifice were being gradually dropped. Hence under Hezekiah and Manasseh the reforming party had evolved a simplified cultus from which were eliminated the smearing of sacred stones, the erection of ashera poles, and other rites whose exact meaning is now largely matter of conjecture. The Reformers branded the practices of the popular party as Canaanite, and there they were entirely right. When, however, instead of calling their own ritual Canaanite Cultus (Revised Version) they proclaimed it as being Primitive Israelite, they were quite wrong. It was a new thing which had come into being gradually during the last two centuries or so. But Primitive Israelite was simply the way in which *Genuine* Israelite presented itself to their mind; the ideal figured itself as a thing of the past. Hence the antithesis Israelite Cultus *versus* Canaanite was fair enough, though the historical basis was imaginary; the antithesis was really between the enlightened and refined cultus of a city-state and the crude heterogeneous rites of a semi-barbaric antiquity.

The law-makers accepted the "Israelite" ritual as the one which was really pleasing to their god, and all "Canaanite" customs were condemned.

The condemnation was extended to the ancient Canaanites themselves. By an obvious fiction the nation was supposed to be of pure Israelite stock, and fictitious "wars of extermination" were invented. This extermination (on paper only) is thus simply the result of theological prepossessions.

The treatment of prophecy in the Code is singularly jejune. The prophet is inspired by Yahweh to predict coming events. Those who refuse to listen will be held responsible. If the event is different from the prophecy the prophet need not be believed another time, in fact he may be put to death. Also, the prophet who invites people to worship any other god is to be put to death.

A number of semi-religious practices were legislated against. They had been already condemned by the reforming party as displeasing to Yahweh. These were the propitiation of the dead, the consulting of *ôbs*, and all bastard forms of prophecy and divination.

The rest of the great Code need not detain us here. It consists of laws on a great variety of subjects—the sexes, slavery, naturalisation, etc. etc. Throughout it all run two great principles, the consciousness of the importance and destiny of Jerusalem, and the necessity of kindness, *mansuetudo*, between man and man.

The most striking thing about the Revolution is its extraordinarily sweeping character. It was im-

possible for any class save the nobles even to attempt it; and it would have been impossible for them if the issue had been simply the Capital versus the Country. But the nobles were themselves the great lords of the country districts, and many of them must have held hereditary priesthoods in the shrines which they attacked.

The primary intention of the Deuteronomic Code is political; there is indeed a great deal of religion in it, but it is political religion. The aim sought is not the glory of God, but the safety and welfare of the State. Yet there is much in it which reflects the views of the spiritually-minded reformers. The notion that it is a compromise between the priests who loved all shrines and the prophets who loved none is absurd, for such a settlement would be no compromise at all. If two men were arguing for and against the English Public Schools, where would be the "compromise" in suggesting that all the Schools should be abolished save one, and that all well-to-do parents should send their sons to it? Nor is it true that the prophets of the seventh century disliked all shrines. The Jerusalem prophets had learned at least to tolerate their own temple as an integral part of the city they loved. And here is to be found the real influence of the prophetic party. They were now devoted to the city-idea, and it was therefore only natural that the revolutionists who turned the State into a City should

look to those religious enthusiasts who appreciated the city for instruction on *numen* and *cultus*; the more so as it was their god who had defended the city in the days of Sennacherib. The professional priesthood must have been divided, conviction and interest going hand in hand with both parties. The revolutionists had the sanction of the Jerusalem priests and the opposition of the Country "Levites."

Who committed the Deuteronomic Code to writing cannot now be determined; it is far more important to examine the way in which it was brought into force.

Hebrew antiquity knew four forms of "Law." There was the *torah* given by the priests at the shrine, there was the word of Yahweh given by the prophets, there was the statute or ordinance proceeding from the king or other supreme commander, and there was the judgment or case-decision of the judge. None of these was adequate to the promulgation of a constitution.

By a masterly political device the whole Code was assigned in the first place to Moses. We may wonder why David, whose circumstances were so much more suitable, was not chosen, but the answer is that David was too *near*. The lengthy memory of pre-writing days would have refused to accept the legislation as Davidic. Moses was different; he was *magni nominis umbra*. No one had any idea what he had or had not decreed. In

an unhistoric age the impossibility of the chief of a nomad horde legislating for a city-state was not recognised. The writing was placed in the Temple and there "discovered" by the chief priest. The whole question of the *morality* of the legal fiction is beside the mark. When you are doing a thing for the first time you must do it in such a way as to secure least resistance if you want to do it at all. How far the device was consciously recognised as a fiction we cannot say. Josiah was probably the only member of the upper classes in Jerusalem who did not know the whole story. Among the ignorant country people, on the other hand, the Mosaic origin was probably believed.

The writing had thus received the sanction of Hilkiyah, the chief priest. The chief point was to have the word of the prophets on the subject. Apparently Zephaniah was dead, for the leading prophet of the day was Huldah, perhaps aunt by marriage of the great Jeremiah. Josiah sent to consult her (she had quarters in the Mishneh, wherever that was), and she expressed her approval of the newly-discovered Code.

But something was still wanting to make the Code the constitution of Israel.

We have seen that in cases of doubtful succession to the throne recourse was had to a berith, a covenant of the people in the presence of Yahweh.

The same course was followed now. A vast

concourse of people of all ranks was assembled in the Temple court. The new Code was read out in their ears. The king "*stood on the standing-place and cut the berith.*" He divided a calf into two pieces. The halves were laid before Yahweh (on Jachin and Boaz?), and the whole procession—nobles, priests, prophets, populace—walked or danced between. It was a great day—the birthday of constitutionalism in Jerusalem; and the form of city law was found neither in priestly instruction nor royal ordinance, but in the solemn agreement of all classes of the free people in the presence of their god.

It was not anticipated that the law would ever need to be amended, and therefore no provision for law-making was included. But the growth of the principle of freedom was rapid. In the Deuteronomical Code it was laid down that every Hebrew slave was to be offered his freedom after six years of service. Before many years had elapsed, the very idea of a *Hebrew slave* had become anomalous, and it was decided that every Judahite was to be given his freedom. It was obvious at once that no power could amend the constitution except that which had ratified it, and therefore we find the whole governing class again going through their quaint antique ceremony, passing between the halves of the divided calf. It may strike us as an odd form of law-making, but it contained the all-essential condition—that a free people legislates for itself.

CHAPTER XX

THE CITY-STATE

THE great Revolution which changed the Monarchy of Judah into the City-state of Jerusalem took place in 621 B.C., and for rather more than thirty years the city continued to live amid the world-storms which were then raging.

The topography of the ancient city can be recovered with certainty only in broad outline. Jerusalem was built on three hills, of which the one to the east was occupied by the Temple, the king's palace, and possibly the palaces of the nobles. The Temple lay to the north of the other buildings and on higher ground. In King David's day Jerusalem was probably confined to Ophel, but in the centuries which followed it had no doubt expanded, especially towards the west. Of the two hills on the west side of the central depression the southern was the larger, and was occupied by the main part of the town. Deep valleys protected the city on every side but the

North. The whole was surrounded by walls pierced with many gates, each bearing its own name—the Sheep Gate, the Gate of Benjamin, etc. Each trade appears to have had its own street or bazaar.

At the time of the Revolution the Temple was the focus of worship, but by no means all the cultus of Jerusalem was performed there. There was an altar on the roof of the palace. There was a bamah at the principal gate; perhaps one at every gate. Jeremiah speaks as if each street had its altar. The worship of Melek took place outside the city.

It is a common and not unnatural mistake to regard the “house” or temple-building of Solomon as the place of worship somewhat in the fashion of a church. This of course is quite wrong. The sacrifices took place in the court under the sky, and in early days worship and sacrifice were practically synonymous. The house was designed for keeping the Ark, which in the constitutional period had come to be regarded as the Palladium of Jerusalem; also the processional images, the sacrificial tools, etc. It was, moreover, the dwelling-place of some of the priests. The writer in the *Kings* who describes Solomon’s temple is careful to explain that although the house was flanked by chambers three stories high, yet they were not structurally connected with it; but the narrator of the “child Samuel” episodes is familiar with a temple in which sacred ministers slept.

The great point to bear in mind is our almost total ignorance of the courts, buildings, rites, and priesthods of the First Temple. In four hundred years it must have grown greatly, and probably the courts were in time surrounded with shrines and buildings of all sorts. Priests of various rites, prophets, temple servants, many of them with wives and families, all these, besides the less desirable classes, lived in the sacred enclosure. We have scattered hints which point to a very considerable community, but they are only hints, and do not suffice for a reconstruction either of the place or its inhabitants.

What, for instance, is the *Mishneh*, from which Zephaniah predicted a howling in the Day of Yahweh? Was it a temple court? Apparently so, for Huldah the prophetess lived there, and her husband was Keeper of the Robes. Had the *Mishneh* priests of its own, and was their head an important official, distinct from the chief priest of the Temple?

The common belief at the present day is that the outer court included the palace, but I find the old view simpler, that the temple itself had (at least) two courts, though it is by no means necessary that the one completely surrounded the other. Both courts were places of sacrifice. At least three gates led into the (outer?) court, for there were three Keepers of the Threshold, and the king's gate is called the Third Entry. Between the courts was

the New Gate—which implies others. New Gate was the rostrum of the enclosure.

What, again, were the *Parwarim*, where the chief Eunuch lived and where the Horses of the Sun were stabled? They were at the entry of the House of Yahweh.

If Maaseiah, one of the Keepers of the Threshold, lived, as we may guess, at his own gate, there was a large pile of buildings at that spot, for the Council Chamber of the Nobles was on the first floor above him, and the pupils of the prophet Hanan occupied the chamber next to the nobles. The Temple Scribe had his chamber at New Gate.

In the course of four centuries many cults had found a home in the Temple courts, where they lived not always peaceably. Thus at the accession of King Joash we read that Jehoiada, the priest of one rite, broke down the image of another priest, Mattan, and slew the man himself. The cultus of Yahweh had always been nominally supreme, though even as *θεὸς ἐπιχώριος* of Jerusalem he was possibly invoked under the old name Zedek. Jeremiah has a great phrase *Yahweh Zidkenu*, Yahweh our Zedek, with a play on the meaning "righteousness." Under Manasseh the cultus of sun, moon, and stars had become of great importance, though the worship of Yahweh had not, of course, been ousted. The cultus of Baal is puzzling. It was simply the worship of Yahweh under another name; but whether there was

a special Baal-altar, or Baal sacrifices at the Yahweh altar, cannot be stated with certainty.

Of the priesthoods of the Temple we know little. The "high priest" of the Second Temple did not yet exist. He stands to the Kings as do the Popes to the Roman Emperors. While there was still a king he was himself *sacerdos summus*, and executed the State ritual in person. The Chronicler has a curious story about Uzziah losing some priestly function. There may be a historical nucleus in this, for Ahaz some years later made great innovations, resulting apparently in two high altars, at only one of which he officiated in person. There were, as we have indicated, apparently two important priesthoods in the temple, both of Yahweh, and independent of each other. In the constitutional period one was held by Hilkiah and then by Seraiah; the other by Pashur, succeeded by Zephaniah (not the prophet).

At the Revolution all priesthoods, except those of Yahweh *sub hoc nomine*, were abolished from the Jerusalem Temple, but they soon began to reassemble in their old places. There was, however, a distinct objection to them, and they lived on sufferance. The worship of the sun re-established itself in the Inner Court, but there is no mention of new chariots to replace those which Josiah had destroyed.

Many of the country shrines were abolished, not without bloodshed. The prophet Jeremiah went on a tour round the country in order to induce the

people to comply with the berith, but when he reached the shrine of Anathoth, of which he was himself a priest, he was threatened with death. No such violent alteration could hope to establish itself all at once. The great thing was to have got the principle established as a basis for future action. Politically the Revolution was in the main successful. The king's Servants practically disappear from history, for the offices of State were now filled by nobles.

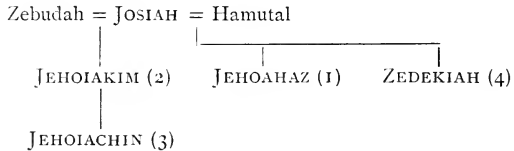
The times were very troublous. The great Empires of Africa and Asia were having their last struggle for the hegemony of the Syrian world, which was already almost ruined.

“ Meantime Ferrara lay in rueful case ;
The lady-city, for whose sole embrace
Her pair of suitors struggled, felt their arms
A brawny mischief to the fragile charms
They tugged for—one discovering that to twist
Her tresses twice or thrice about his wrist
Secured a point of vantage—one, how best
He'd parry that by planting in her breast
His elbow spike—each party too intent
For noticing, howe'er the battle went,
The conqueror would but have a corpse to kiss.”

Browning's picture of the struggle between Guelf and Ghibellin aptly pictures that of Egypt and Assyria for the possession of the Western Semitic kingdoms.

A genealogical table will assist the reader to remember the family relations of Josiah and the four succeeding kings. The number in brackets

after each name indicates the order in which they came to the throne :—



The Revolution in Judah took place in 621 B.C.

In 609 Pharaoh Necho advanced from Egypt. Josiah, as became a loyal vassal of Assyria, tried to oppose the Egyptian march, though the line of route did not lie through Judah. The forces met at Megiddo, on the hills bordering the Plain of Jezreel, and Josiah was slain. He was succeeded by Jehoahaz, but Pharaoh after overrunning Syria deposed him and banished him to Egypt, placing Jehoiakim on the throne.

In 606 Nineveh fell before the forces of Babylon and her allies.

In 604 the great battle of Carchemish was fought between Pharaoh Necho and Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. The fortune of the day went against Egypt.

Jehoiakim went over to the winning side for a time, but unfortunately he again changed his policy and returned to the Egyptian alliance. Nebuchadrezzar sent an army against Jerusalem. At this juncture Jehoiakim died, and his little son Jehoiachin was placed on the throne. The city surrendered at

discretion, and the Babylonians took away the king, the gebirah, and many of the upper classes. This is called the *First Captivity* (597).

Zedekiah was placed on the throne, and after a time he too adopted the fatal policy of relying on Egypt. Nebuchadrezzar again sent a force and besieged the city for sixteen months. When the famine became intolerable Zedekiah tried to escape, but was captured. The city was taken ; the leading nobles were put to death, and the upper classes generally were deported. This is the *Second* or *Great Captivity*. The city itself was burnt to the ground. At last the long-expected Day of Yahweh had come ; fire came upon Judah and devoured the palaces of Jerusalem.

In the preconstitutional period the *Nobles* probably appeared to the reader as rather shadowy persons. This was inevitable ; for although they are frequently mentioned as a class, we have little detail of names and incidents. The elaboration of the picture is confined for the most part to the kings and the prophets. From the Revolution onward to the end, however (as indeed we should expect), we know something of the leading men in the State.

At the outset we are faced by the difficulty that several persons bear the same name. Thus there were three well-known Jeremiahs, viz. the father of Josiah's wife Hamutal ; the great prophet ; and the

Rechabite. In the same way there were three Seraiahs and three or four Shallums. The individual is generally distinguished by his title or by his father's name, as Shaphan the Scribe, or Baruch ben Neriah ; but the difficulty lies in determining whether two men were brothers when the names of their fathers were the same. Where the name is a well-known one we may assume the relationship, if only for convenient classification, although no argument can be based on the supposed identity.

Of the men of 621 we may notice first *Hilkiah ben Shallum*. He is called the "high priest," but this is obviously the mistake of a later hand. His correct title was apparently *Cohen ha-Rosh*—whatever that may have signified. He was undoubtedly the most important official in the Temple, and as it was he who found the Book of the Law, it has been conjectured that he wrote it. The question is of no importance, as it is doubtful whether we possess the original form of the great berith, and in any case it must have been compiled in substance by the nobles in consultation, since the idea that it was a pious exercise or theoretical discussion of principles can hardly be maintained seriously. We may, however, undoubtedly learn something of the character of Hilkiah from the directions concerning the priests. Of course the destruction of the country shrines and the alien cults of Jerusalem was so entirely in his own interests that we can base nothing

on that; but the reform of the Yahweh worship itself—involving as it did the abolition of lucrative practices—shows him to have been a follower of Isaiah, while his kindness of heart is indicated by his constant instructions to provide for the disestablished clergy. It has often been assumed that Hilkiyah was the father of the prophet Jeremiah, but this is very unlikely, because the prophet's priesthood was at Anathoth, not Jerusalem.

The house of *Shaphan* was one of the most influential in Jerusalem during the constitutional period. Shaphan was Temple Scribe, and it was he who undertook the difficult and dangerous task of introducing the new laws to the king's notice. He read the roll in the royal presence, and had the satisfaction of observing that the king accepted it as the law of Yahweh. Together with his son *Ahikam*, Shaphan was sent to the Mishneh to consult the prophetess Huldah on the subject of the law. Ahikam was one of the leading nobles in Jehoiakim's reign. On one occasion when Jeremiah was being mobbed by the priests and prophets in the temple court, Ahikam and other nobles came up from the King's House, where they sat in the chamber of the Royal Scribe, and interfered on the prophet's behalf. "*The hand of Ahikam was with Jeremiah.*" Ahikam had a son called *Gedaliah*, who when the city had been taken was appointed Governor of the people by the Babylonians. He established himself at

Mizpah, and began the great task of reorganising the fragments of the nation. The captains of the wandering bands of Judahites gave in their allegiance, but Gedaliah, in spite of warning, was soon murdered by Ishmael. *Gemariah* was another son of Shaphan. He succeeded his father as Temple Scribe, and together with his son *Michaiah* and other nobles tried to repeat Shaphan's success by bringing a roll of Jeremiah's prophecies to the notice of King Jehoiakim. The king, however, contemptuously cut the roll, and threw it on the fire in spite of Gemariah's entreaties. A third son of Shaphan is mentioned, *Elasah*. He was sent as ambassador from Jerusalem to Babylon in Zedekiah's time, and by him Jeremiah sent prophecies to the men of the First Captivity. Yet another son was *Jaazaniah*. Unlike the other members of the family, he took the reactionary side in religion, and in the last days of the city he introduced and presided over occult mysteries in secret chambers of the Temple. His theory was that Yahweh had forsaken the land.

Maaseiah is said by the Chronicler to have been Governor of the City at the time of the Revolution, and in any case he is to be distinguished from the Keeper of the Threshold of the same name. His son *Zephaniah* was priest of the Mishneh, in succession to Pashur ben Immer, who had been carried away in the First Captivity. This office appears also to be described as *pakid nagid* or "chief overseer"

of the house of Yahweh, and was a most important position. Unlike his predecessor, Zephaniah was friendly to Jeremiah, and informed him of plots laid against him. On two occasions he was sent by the king to learn the word of Yahweh from the lips of the prophet. When the city was taken Zephaniah was carried off, with other prominent nobles, to Riblah, where Nebuchadrezzar then held his court, and was there put to death. Another of Maaseiah's sons was *Zedekiah*. We do not know what office (if any) he held in Jerusalem, but he was carried away in the First Captivity. While in Babylon he became a prophet, and tried to keep up the hearts of the exiles by foretelling a speedy return. For this he was "roasted in the fire" by Nebuchadrezzar. Of Maaseiah's remaining son, *Neriah*, we know nothing, except that he was the father of *Baruch*, the pupil and secretary of Jeremiah. Baruch committed his master's prophecies to writing, and shared his unpopularity during the siege. After the fall of the city he was taken with Jeremiah to Egypt.

Achbor was another of the men of 621. He formed one of the deputation to Huldah. In Jehoiakim's reign Achbor's son, *Elnathan*, went down to Egypt to ask for the extradition of Urijah, a runaway prophet, whom he brought back to Jerusalem for execution. Elnathan's daughter, *Nehushta*, married King Jehoiakim. Elnathan was also one of those who brought Jeremiah's prophecies to the

king's notice and entreated that they might not be burned.

Elishama was the Royal Scribe in Jehoiakim's reign, and was himself of royal descent. As has been said, he had quarters in the palace and his chamber was used by the nobles when they wished to meet there, whereas in the Temple they had a room of their own distinct from that of the Temple Scribe. Elishama's grandson, *Ishmael*, was the assassin of Gedaliah, and was himself put to death by Johanan, captain of one of the roving bands during the siege.

Besides the names mentioned above, we have allusions to many other nobles. The whole number of the aristocracy cannot be guessed, if indeed it was accurately defined. Between seventy and eighty suffered death after the siege. Their position in the City-state was expressed by King Zedekiah: "*The king is not he that can do anything against you.*"

CHAPTER XXI

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH BEN HILKIAH, priest of the Benjamite shrine Anathoth, received the prophetic call while he was still a youth, in the thirteenth year of Josiah (626 B.C.), five years before the Revolution. His visions were somewhat commonplace—a branch of almond-tree, and a boiling pot tilted towards the South. From the first of these he was taught, by a play on words, that Yahweh was watching over his word to perform it. The visions of great prophets who had denounced the nation had not been empty dreams; the time was not yet, but Yahweh would make good his word in his own time. From his second vision Jeremiah learnt that calamity was coming from the North. A new note, however, is sounded—the foresight of Yahweh and his adaptation to each other of message and messenger. “*Before thou camest forth from the womb, I made thee kodesh and appointed thee prophet.*”

Jeremiah took his part in the Revolution, and

during the remainder of Josiah's reign he was a strong supporter of the king's policy. After the fatal battle of Megiddo he wrote a *kinah*, and from this date his life-work really began.

Throughout his life the vision of the boiling pot remained engraven on his memory. The North, not the South, was the point from which Yahweh's judgment would manifest itself. Only by submitting herself to God's will in this matter could Judah hope for a mitigation of her punishment. Submission to Babylon is life and safety ; trusting to Egypt is folly and destruction. It is no question of *policy* with the prophet—it is a matter of right and wrong, for Yahweh has plainly revealed his will by the hand of his servant.

During Jehoiakim's reign Jeremiah was of great influence in the State. He was still largely occupied in the sphere of morals generally, and the nobles supported him against the priests and the prophets, who considered that all was now "settled on the best and surest foundations" since the Revolution. We must give the nobles all credit for their recognition of the fact that the reforming prophecy had not exhausted itself, and that abuses still remained which required to be eradicated. Jehoiakim refused to listen to the prophet's warnings. We can hardly blame him, for he must have recognised that reform went hand in hand with diminution of the royal prerogative. On one occasion the prophet was in

serious trouble. He had gone down to the potter's house, and there taking a vessel in his hands had first symbolically emptied it and then dashed it to pieces. Returning to the Temple he announced that, because of the recrudescence of foreign cults, all the evils pronounced by previous prophets would come upon Jerusalem. Pashur, the priest, confined him for twenty-four hours in the stocks at the gate of Benjamin, where courts were held.

When Jehoiakim died at the time of the Babylonian advance, and eight-year-old Jehoiachin was placed on the throne, Jeremiah became a person of supreme importance, because the gebirah was the daughter of his friend and supporter Elnathan. It was, no doubt, entirely owing to Jeremiah that the city surrendered, and the king, the gebirah, and the nobles gave themselves into the hands of the Babylonians. The men of the First Captivity went away with fairly light hearts. The evil day had come. They had submitted to Yahweh's will, and he had promised to have mercy. In two or three years their exile would end, and they would return again to Jerusalem, when the period of glorious prosperity which Isaiah had promised would at length begin.

It is rather surprising that Jeremiah did not himself go to Babylon, but, in truth, the greater part of his work remained to be done. Under Zedekiah the parts of king and nobles were reversed. The king

was convinced that Jeremiah was right and that the Egyptian alliance was folly, but he was quite unable to carry out his views. The nobles were infatuated with the desire to defy Babylon. It is hardly unfair to see more selfishness than statesmanship in this. As allies of Egypt, their own positions would be secure even in the event of the exiles' return. The men who had feebly surrendered would never succeed in ousting the men who had successfully kept the flag flying. Jeremiah's prophecy narrows itself down to a constant cry, "Submit to Babylon." During the last years and the siege he went about with his life in his hand. Accused of treachery, of desertion, of weakening the defence, he was imprisoned and at one time thrown into a loathsome dungeon, where he sank up to the knees in filth. It was a terrible discipline, but to the end he remained an "iron pillar and a wall of brass" against king, nobles, prophets, priests, and populace. A faithful few still stood by him, and at last the strain came to an end with the downfall of the city.

The Babylonians gave him free choice to go or to remain, and once more (still more curiously) he elected to live in the land. When Gedaliah and his murderer had both perished, the remnant of nobles and captains fled to Egypt, and took the prophet with them against his will. The last we hear of him is his denunciation of those who still in Egypt continued to worship the queen of heaven.

The prophet's earliest discourses, delivered before the Revolution, are closely modelled on the writings of Hosea, of whom he was the spiritual successor. As is common in cases of discipleship, we find first a similarity of form, and later on a unity of spirit while the form has changed. Jeremiah reproduces the desert-espousals, the apostasy to Baal, the many gods of the land, the folly of idols, the uselessness of alliances either with Egypt or Assyria, the stubborn wild ass in the desert. Yet even in his earliest work the prophet is not untrue to the City and its hopes, for while he looks forward to the time when the Ark will be despised and forgotten, he foresees that the City itself will be Yahweh's throne, and that all nations will invoke Yahweh in Jerusalem.

In the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophet resolved to follow the example of Micah by a great discourse in the temple court, and he has preserved for us, in writing, the substance of the speech at considerable length. He begins by urging the people not to rely on the fact that the building in which they stood was Yahweh's Temple. The only basis for the community is justice and a single-hearted devotion to Yahweh himself. What happened to Shiloh? Yahweh had a famous temple there, and now it lies in ruins. Nay, the whole Northern kingdom has disappeared. The people are all idolaters, sacrificing to the queen of heaven, and thinking that Yahweh

will be satisfied because he, too, has sacrifices. Yahweh never asked for sacrifices; he sends prophets and bids his people obey his voice. The people offer to Yahweh their sons and their daughters—a sacrifice which “*I commanded not, nor did it come into my mind.*” In a fine picture he paints the violation of the tombs—a terrible disaster in the ancient world—when the bones of kings, and priests, and prophets will be exposed to the sun, and moon, and stars, “*which they loved and which they worshipped.*” The desolation of the people is foretold, and then the prophet breaks out:—

“O that my head were waters,
And mine eyes a fountain of tears,
Then would I weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my people.”

Once more he denounces their sins and predicts the coming judgment, closing with the splendid peroration:—

“*Thus saith Yahweh: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength; let not the rich glory in his riches. But he that glories let him glory in this that he rightly knows me, that I am Yahweh, exercising lovingkindness and justice and righteousness on earth. For in these things I have pleasure, saith Yahweh.*”

The result was not so successful as in the case of Micah. The priests and prophets were anxious to put Jeremiah to death, but the nobles refused to

sanction his execution, and in this they were supported by the common people.

During the reign of Zedekiah, the prophet not only held to his position of the necessity of submitting to Babylon, but communicated with the exiles of the First Captivity, urging them not to expect a speedy return, but to settle down in the land where they were placed until Yahweh's time came.

The work of Jeremiah is of the utmost consequence in the history of religion. It was his function to dissociate the idea of 'God from local conceptions and, what was far harder, from the political and social nexus. In a word, he had to introduce individuality into the sphere of religion, and make the religious life a matter no longer social but personal.

It is true that he, no more than Isaiah, can escape his limitations. When all is over he still pictures the City-state worshipping its god. But he goes as far as he can. The city is not inviolable, as Isaiah had taught. It will be taken and destroyed. A definite end will be made to its history for the time. The people are to go away and live under the conditions of exile, in as settled a fashion as if they had no anticipation of return. It will be really a new Jerusalem to which their descendants return.

It may be said that this is essentially the idea of Hosea, and that is so far true. But Hosea's idea of

return never came into play as far as Samaria was concerned, while Judah fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah. It was just because Jeremiah succeeded in making religion the affair of the individual soul that Jerusalem was rebuilt.

First, his individualism shows itself in regard to himself. He is the prophet of the inner life. Other prophets had been divine spokesmen, uttering the words which Yahweh gave them to utter. Jeremiah is the first to give us colloquies between the soul and God. In his isolation he finds God his resource. Other men, no doubt, had found the same, but not consciously, definitely speaking and arguing with God in their souls.

“Thou art ever in the right, O Yahweh, when I dispute with thee; yet let me talk with thee concerning thy judgments.”

And again:—

“Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy words were a pleasure and inward delight to me.”

His appeal is personal:—

“Heal me, O Yahweh, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved. . . . Thou art my shelter in the day of calamity.”

He reproaches God:—

“Thou hast persuaded me, O Yahweh, and I let myself be persuaded. Thou didst use force and hast prevailed.”

It is evident that to such a man the whole of

religion has become self-centred. He depends no longer on the shrine or on the holy mountain, on kings or priests. The kingdom of God—the divine rule—is within him. Wherever he goes he takes his religion, for the whole sphere of religion is his own soul.

Without recognising it, he sounded the death-knell even of his own Order. The theory of the prophets had been that Israel was instructed by divinely appointed spokesmen. But the moment a man reaches the standpoint of Jeremiah, all need for “men of God” has vanished. If religion is simply “God and the soul, the soul and God,” the function of the exterior voice has gone.

The contrast between Isaiah and Jeremiah on this point is extremely well-defined. Both are speaking of the restored Jerusalem. Isaiah says:—

“Thy teachers shall be no more hidden, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.”

Jeremiah prophesies:—

“I will put my law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts; and I will be to them a god, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall no longer instruct every one his comrade, and every one his brother, saying, Know ye Yahweh;

for they shall all know me from the least among them unto the greatest."

Here we see the effect of "freedom" in the sphere of the spiritual life. In the City-state man learnt to regard himself as a self-determining unit—a microcosm in the macrocosm of city life. In the case of Jerusalem this inevitably meant that each individual soul became the throne of Yahweh.

It must never be forgotten, however, that individualism is the product of certain forms of society; it cannot exist apart from the greater whole. That very individual knowledge of God which is to Jeremiah the highest blessing, was itself, after all, the result of a certain association of men in political and social life. It was of the utmost value that Israel should be taught that God was in each not in all; but it was, after all, a one-sided truth. It was a spiritual discovery of the first importance that man *quâ* man stood in direct personal relation to the Unseen Power; it enabled Israel to survive the Exile; it can never again be lost. But we must not suppose that here we have a high-water mark of spiritual enlightenment from which later generations fell away. The popular contrast drawn between the prophets and the Law (to the disadvantage of the latter) ignores the fact that Jeremianic religion is blind to the social forces which have produced itself.

But more of this later. The men of the Exile carried their god with them—not in processional

image, not in the antique Ark, but as a living force in their own hearts, and thus alone was their religion able to survive the downfall of their shrine. And this was largely due to the teaching, and still more to the example, of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah is the best example of the Silver Prophecy. There is comparatively little in his book that is inscrutable or even ambiguous. We feel that we have travelled far from the passionate pictorial utterances of his great master Hosea. He is conscious of a definite aim, and is master of his own method. Yet he is still very far removed from the mere preacher. His own word and the word of Yahweh are distinct.

“And if I say, I will not remember him, and will speak no more in his name, there is that in my heart which is like burning fire enclosed in my bones, and I am worn out with restraining myself, and can do so no more.”

This is no mere eloquent phrasing, as it might be in the mouth of a modern speaker; it expresses a definite opposition between Yahweh and his spokesman.

“Cursed be the day on which I was born,” he exclaims in his despair at his position in the city. The birth-pangs of personal religion were no light anguish. His spirit revolts at the facile way in which his brother-prophets give their vaticinations.

Whatever comes into their heads they announce with the sanction—"burden of Yahweh." It is a mere parrot-cry, and he forbids its use. Every prophet is to say, "Yahweh has answered thus," or, "Yahweh has said thus." With this direct and solemn utterance Jeremiah believes the levity of both people and prophets will be lessened, for no man will dare to use it casually.

Jeremiah's symbolical acts exhibit the curious prophetic confusion between the actual and the visionary. Thus when he tells us that he sent yokes to all the neighbouring nations by the hand of their ambassadors, he is undoubtedly relating an historical fact. When, on the other hand, he tells us that he was commanded to give the chalice of God's wrath to all the kings of the earth to drink, he is speaking of visions only, although it is narrated with precision, and the prophet is directed as to what he is to say to those kings who refuse.

Why Jeremiah refused to go to Babylon must always remain conjectural, but it is eloquent evidence that his work was successful: the people needed him no longer.

CHAPTER XXII

RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN JERUSALEM AT THE DATE OF THE EXILE

WHEN the city fell there were three religions within its walls, not mutually exclusive but yet well-defined : the worship of the stars, the worship of Yahweh-Baal, and the worship of Yahweh Zebaoth.

The first of these survived, but ceases to be of interest ; that a few Judahites were added to the innumerable star-worshippers in the great world is of no importance.

The cult of Yahweh-Baal inevitably perished with the destruction of the city and shrine. It was a mere aspect of certain political and geographical conditions, apart from which it had no vitality.

The worship of Yahweh Zebaoth, by which we mean the enlightened Yahweh worship, went into exile in the hearts of the worshippers.

Zebaoth is a prophetic term of which neither the grammar nor the meaning is obvious. It signifies apparently "hosts" or "armies." Whatever

may have been the first meaning of Yahweh Zebaoth, at a comparatively early date it at least was taken to mean Yahweh, *god of Hosts*, and is so paraphrased later. By the hosts of which Yahweh was the god we may most probably understand, at least in the classical period, neither stars, nor angels, nor Judahite armies exclusively, but rather *all* the tribes of things in the universe—trees, animals, men, stars, etc. There is a great song of which scattered fragments occur in the writings of the prophets (some of these may be interpolations), and the refrain is “Yahweh Zebaoth is his name.”

“ He that formed the mountains,
And created the wind,
And declareth unto man what is his thought ;
That maketh the morning darkness,
And treadeth on the high places of the earth,
Yahweh Zebaoth is his name.

“ He that made the Pleiades and Orion,
And turneth the shadow into the morning,
And maketh the day dark with night ;
That calleth for the waters of the sea,
And poureth them out on the earth,
Yahweh Zebaoth is his name

“ He that created and stretched out the heavens
That spread forth the earth,
With the things that spring from it ;
That giveth breath to the people of it ;
And spirit to them that walk through it
Yahweh Zebaoth is his name.

“ He that giveth the sun for a light by day,
And the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by
night ;
That stirred up the sea,
So that its waves roared,
Yahweh Zebaoth is his name.”

We have here a sufficiently clear picture of the relation of Yahweh Zebaoth to the universe : he is its maker, but still more he is its ruler. Hebrew is apt to be shaky about its tenses according to our notions, and all the verbs in the song are present tense in their way. Creation and government are not distinguished, but are parts of one great process.

Yahweh Zebaoth was the god of all nations. He made them, gave them their homes, watched over them. “ *Have I not brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir ?* ” Yahweh would judge them for their cruelty to each other. All unconsciously they were carrying out the purposes of the god of Israel. “ *The rod of mine anger,* ” Isaiah calls Sennacherib — “ *howbeit he meaneth not so.* ” By the hand of the prophets Yahweh sent messages to all nations ; and I believe, although the matter is incapable of proof, that even before the Fall of Jerusalem Yahweh had something of an international character in the eyes of the nations round about. The continuous re-editing of Yahweh’s words to the nations implies a demand for them. Jerusalem appears to have been, at least to some extent, the Delphi of the Syrian world.

Yahweh's relation to Israel was peculiar. It had begun purely as a natural relationship. But Israel had learned that God is not dependent on his worshippers, and that he governs the whole world. Hence his connection with Israel became one of choice on his part. At the Exodus he had selected the nation as one to whom he chose to reveal his will. To the prophets the election of Israel expressed itself as an exaltation of their own Order, which would have been intolerable but for the good use to which they turned it. The whole history was a sending of prophets. "*By a prophet Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved,*" said Hosea. "*Surely Adonai Yahweh does nothing without revealing his intention to the prophets,*" said Amos. "*Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending,*" said Jeremiah. As Yahweh assumed more and more a supernatural character (so to speak) the prophets magnified their office, and the one duty of Israel was to listen to Yahweh's word by the hand of his servants. Israel was very far from conceding this somewhat extravagant pretension. The ancestral cultus, the sacrifices of the shrines, were an integral part of religion. No doubt Yahweh was not dependent on them. Once God is recognised as Creator the idea of actually feeding him becomes

absurd. But still there it was. He undoubtedly desired these sacrifices, and it would be disastrous to withhold them.

Had the religion of Israel been an affair exclusively of priests or prophets it would have perished ; it survived because it had become individual. This was the result of political training in the City-state. Men like the members of the house of Shaphan, stood in an individual and self-determining relation to the State, and this reflected itself in their attitude to the god of the State. The permanent value of Israel's religion lay in the fact that men recognised that in the personal sphere the prime demand of God was righteousness.

It required the discipline of the Exile to drive this home. Nothing but the destruction of the shrine and the cessation of sacrifice, the resolution of Israel into atoms, could establish finally and for ever the fact that the interior life of man is the real scene of the religious life.

The rewards and punishments of Yahweh took place in this life only. The views of the ancient Israelites as to the unseen world did not differ materially from those of the other nations of antiquity. After death the shade or ghost of the man survived. It was necessary to perform the funeral rites scrupulously to ensure (for the benefit both of the dead and the living) that the shade went quietly down into the dreary Sheol and stopped

there. An unknown prophet has given us a splendid picture of the king of Babylon's ghost entering the under-world: "*Sheol from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the shades for thee, all the leaders of the earth; it raiseth from their thrones all the kings of the nations. They all answer and say unto thee, Art thou also made weak as we? Art thou made like unto us?*"

Nothing was more unkind or unlucky than to violate tombs.

The dead might be consulted as to future events, but it was always illicit to do so. The living national god, not the dead hero, was the proper source of information.

The Yahwist sections of the early portion of Genesis contain fragments of the folklore of the people—either indigenous or Assyrian—as revised by some pious author to bring them into conformity with the religious ideas of the eighth or seventh centuries. He has left out whatever he thought was unedifying, and has put Yahweh into every narrative. To have entirely rewritten the tales would have been to defeat his own purpose, and therefore the writer has left all mere crudities untouched: Yahweh walks in the garden; the serpent talks; the gods (now "sons of god") beget heroes by intercourse with women; the Babylonians try to build a tower reaching to the sky. We need not suppose that the compiler intended to produce

anything but a pious version of the folklore. It was only centuries later that, being set in the forefront of the Law, it was taken seriously as the basis of Theology and the starting-point of Universal History.

The history of the Patriarchs was also in writing at the time of the Exile. It is admitted by general consent to be a masterpiece of pure narrative. Of course there never was or could be such a state of society as that depicted for us in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These dignified, pious, thoughtful nomads are the products of imagination only. It is the Golden Age of the early prophets translated into narrative—all the gains of civilisation and religion transported to the desert without the slightest diminution. Not such, we may be quite sure, were the rude forefathers of Israel in the wilderness. A multitude of sources have gone to the making of the tale—Canaanite shrine-myths, scraps of tribal history, political pedigrees. But, save to the student, all these are nothing; the story itself is the world's permanent possession.

Many of the narratives included in the other Books of Moses and in the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings were also in writing. We have indicated already that these existed in earlier works, from which the compilers of our present books have excerpted them. Great care is necessary in reading the historical books to distinguish between

the original story (which may itself be comparatively early or comparatively late) and the framework in which it was set in order to show its bearing on the downfall of the City.

Some of the Psalms and the Proverbs were already in existence, as also two collections of laws, one now included in Exodus and one in Deuteronomy (Josiah's Legislation). The lost Book of Jashar contained the heroic ballads of Israel.

When to these we add the writings of the pre-exilic prophets we have practically exhausted the literature of Israel at the time of the Exile—so far as any trace of it has survived.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FOUR VOICES AMONG THE EXILES IN BABYLON

THE men of the First Captivity had gone away with high hopes that their exile would be a short one and that their palaces in Jerusalem would soon welcome them back, when the long-promised Golden Age would begin with Jehoiachin as the Messiah of Yahweh. Nor were prophets lacking to encourage these high hopes. Zedekiah and Ahab predicted that they and their fellow-exiles would soon return, and in Jerusalem itself Hananiah prophesied that two more years would see the end of the punishment. The exiles were naturally incensed when they heard of Jeremiah's dismal vaticinations, and some even wrote to the temple authorities to point out that it was their duty to restrain madmen.

On the other hand, those who remained in the city had no great desire for the Return. They scoffed at the men who had been so eager to go

away from Yahweh's presence, and said "*unto us is this land given for a possession.*" After all, the city was inviolable ; all prophecies of its destruction had come to nothing. "*The days are lengthened and every vision faileth.*"

It was the work of *Ezekiel ben Buzi* to prophesy to the Captivity, as Jeremiah did to the City, that the calamity was not yet over, that Jerusalem must be destroyed.

It is impossible to say accurately, in the case of passionate ecstasies like the Hebrew prophets, where the line is to be drawn that separates sanity from insanity. On the one hand, we may point triumphantly to the existence not only of Judaism but of Christianity at the present day, and say : These are the results of the prophets' work ; their eccentricities are more than justified ; how do we know that they could have carried out their stupendous task in any other way ? On the other hand, it is scarcely credible that a really sane man *could* have acted as Ezekiel did.

Ezekiel's initiatory vision of the Glory of Yahweh surpasses in extravagance anything previously recorded. Indeed it must have been noticed that for the most part the prophetic visions are singularly commonplace. Isaiah's vision of the seraphim is strange but dignified. Ezekiel's vision of a vast flaming mass of wings and wheels, with faces of lions and oxen and eagles and men, which floats

about over the surface of the earth, is terrific rather than impressive.

The prophet's first symbolical action is even more indicative of a mind diseased. He took a tile and sketched on it a plan of Jerusalem. Around it he built forts and set battering-rams. Then taking an iron pan he lay down on the ground, holding the pan between his face and the "city." He lay on his right side for three hundred and ninety days, and then on his left side for forty days.

When this was finished he shaved his head and beard, and divided the hair by weight into three equal parts. He burnt one third, chopped up the second with a sword, and scattered the remainder to the winds. Of the last he saved a few hairs which he fastened to his mantle; then of these he threw a few into the fire.

We can hardly wonder that he was regarded with something more than distrust. To the respectable citizens trained by Jeremiah, whose visions had been of "figs," and whose symbolical actions had been few, it must have been very doubtful whether Yahweh was really speaking by Ezekiel.

Yet there was a very definite method in his apparent madness. He foresaw that the real crux for religion would come when the city was taken. The temptation for every man would be strong to say that Yahweh had forgotten his people, or that there was no Yahweh now at all. It was of the

utmost importance that when the crisis actually came he might be able to say, "I told you so," or rather "Yahweh told you so," and prevent the collapse of faith which would otherwise be almost inevitable. Hence his grotesque actions and the vigour, nay the violence, of his invective were designed to draw attention to himself—even mocking attention. He was willing to sacrifice the present for the future, so that "*when this cometh, then shall ye know that I am Adonai Yahweh.*"

While he thus seeks to prepare for the actual destruction of Jerusalem, he already endeavours to destroy Jerusalem in the hearts of those who were willing to listen, by insisting on an individualism more rigorous than that of Jeremiah. Like the latter he objects strongly to the proverb, "*The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.*" The men of the Exile are paying the penalty of their own sins, not the sins of their fathers. With wearisome iteration the prophet develops the theorems that each man is dealt with separately by Yahweh, and that when a man turns from good to evil or from evil to good it is the last state that Yahweh considers. The same individualising is shown in Yahweh's instructions to the prophet himself. Ezekiel has cure of *souls*, not simply a message to the nation as a whole; and if he does his part and the man still perishes the prophet is free from blame, while if the prophet

fails in his duty the guilt lies on him. The most pleasing feature in the prophet's discourses of this period is the extension of righteousness to include positive acts of kindness—feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Keeping kodesh the Sabbath becomes of the first importance for its own sake. It was a weekly reminder of Yahweh and was compatible with the greatest individualism, since it was a command simply to abstain from labour.

Ezekiel is not a striking writer ; there is little either beautiful or sublime in his work. He is at his best with sharp cutting sentences, as when he rends asunder the popular theory that Israel was not of Canaanite origin — “ *Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.*”

His nearest approach to poetry is in the quaint kînah he wrote for the young exile kings, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, who were in captivity at the same time in Egypt and Babylon respectively. Jeremiah had treated of the same theme in a far more poetical fashion, but Ezekiel's is worth quoting, as it is more original in thought.

“ What was thy mother ? A lioness, among the lions ;
 In the midst of young lions she couched, she reared her whelps.
 And she brought up one of her whelps, he became a young lion,
 And he learned to catch the prey, he devoured men.
 And the nations heard of him, he was taken in their pit,
 And they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt.
 And she saw that she was waiting, her hope fading ;

So she took another of her whelps, she made him a young lion.

And he walked among the lions, he became a young lion ;
And he learned to catch the prey, he devoured men.

And he broke down their palaces, he wasted their cities ;
And the land and its fulness was desolate, at the sound of
his roaring.

Then the nations set themselves against him, on every side
from the countries.

And they spread their net over him, he was taken in their pit.
And they set him in captivity with chains, and brought him
to the king of Babylon ;

That his voice might be heard no more on the mountains of
Israel."

Ezekiel saw the fall of the City in a trance, and the next day the news arrived. The first part of his work was over ; he had been justified as a true prophet in the eyes of all men ; and he had "prevented" the despair and loss of faith which would have overwhelmed the exiles.

He now sets himself to prepare for the reconstitution of the people, and to encourage them to look forward earnestly to their return. It shows how inevitable the social nexus is to the most convinced individualist. The State must be built up again. Individualism does not after all include the possibility of isolation. No doubt the moral necessity for the State appealed far more forcibly to Ezekiel after the destruction of the city than before. His gaze had been fixed on the evil side of civilised life, and his aim had been to prepare the people for a complete separation from their local traditions.

Now that this is accomplished he feels the loss acutely. Israel is resolved into its component individuals, and the prophet sees at once that there lies before him nothing but a "Valley of Dry Bones."

It was a bitter lesson, but a most salutary one. The prophets had always regarded the "day of Yahweh" in far too easy a fashion. They had magnified its darkness and its terrors, but its real danger as a possible total overthrow of religion and morality had practically escaped them. They had assumed that its effect must necessarily be purifying, and that Israel would bend and "kiss the rod." This misapprehension arose from an incomplete appreciation of the value of social and political life; from a mental separation of religion as a thing in itself instead of being one aspect of a complex whole. From the day when Israel came out of Egypt, they had treated the whole of the national development as a matter of indifference or an object of dislike, while all the time they were themselves developing *pari passu*. . . They were conscious of no change in their Order from the days of Deborah to those of Jeremiah, and they failed to recognise that the social and political state which they criticised or condemned was the necessary basis for the work of the great prophets, that it was the very platform on which they stood. Isaiah, indeed, the greatest of them all, had seen something of the truth when he announced that Jerusalem was inviolable, and that

Yahweh would save it for his own sake and for the sake of the ideal it represented ; but even he seems never to have contemplated that the day of Yahweh might easily—so far as Israel was concerned—involve the destruction of Yahweh himself.

It was of course largely due to the prophets that this catastrophe was averted, but after all the preparation it must have been a moment of keen anguish to Ezekiel to find himself face to face, not with passionate espousals of an Israel which preserved everything that was really of value, but with lifeless and disintegrated corpses.

The prophet throws himself earnestly into the work of building up again on a new and enduring basis that civilised State which to so many of his predecessors had seemed to be a matter of quite trifling value.

First comes the great vision alluded to, The Valley of Dry Bones. “ *And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Adonai Yahweh, thou knowest.*”

He is commanded to prophesy over them. First comes a quaking and they come together, bone to bone. Then the sinews and the flesh and the skin come over them. The prophet is commanded to prophesy to the winds, “ *and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*”

Ezekiel devoted the next fourteen years to elabo-

rating a scheme for the nation as soon as Yahweh should restore them to their own land. To our astonishment we find on looking at it that the shrine is the centre of the whole, and that correct cultus is the principal preoccupation of the lawgiver! What would Hosea and Jeremiah have said to their successor being disturbed about the exact dimensions of the altar, the gates by which people are to come in, even about the garments of the priests!

“ I hate, I despise your feasts,
I will not smell in your solemn assemblies,”

said Amos ; and here we have the greatest prophet of the Exile legislating gravely that at the New Moon the sacrifice is to be one bullock, six lambs, one ram, two ephahs of flour, and two hins of oil! It is the nemesis of one-sided thought that it ends by expressing itself as its own contradiction.

Let us not blame Ezekiel ; very far from it. He understood vastly better than Amos and Hosea the ways of God with man. Even Isaiah and Zephaniah had nothing like his grasp of the great truth that the well-ordered State is the only suitable environment and nursery for private virtue. If his detail should strike us as ludicrous (detail often does), let us bear in mind that it is due to a natural reaction, and that the strong desire to see Israel restored called up a clear mental picture which he painfully reproduces in his book.

There is no king in Ezekiel's imaginary restoration. The process begun in Josiah's reign is completed. No political constitution is sketched at all, but the head of the State is *Nasi*, not Melek, and he is to be careful that his palace and burial-ground do not come in contact with the Temple as the buildings of the old kings had done.

In Ezekiel for the first time we get the distinction between clergy and laity. Only one Order of priests is to sacrifice in the restored Temple, viz. the Bnê Zadok, possibly the priests of the old Yahweh-Zedek cult in Jerusalem. The foreign temple-servants are dispensed with, and the country Levites are to take their place. Not even the *Nasi* is to enter the inner court, which is now reserved for priests.

Ezekiel legislates for a fanciful redistribution of the land among all the tribes, for those of the Northern kingdom are also to return. Occasionally he lays down laws on odd, isolated points, as entail, weights and measures, etc. ; but the one great topic is the renewed Temple.

He was a true prophet of the future. His vigorous intellect not only recognised that the social and political nexus was a necessary factor in realising the dreams of the old prophets, but also discerned plainly enough that cultus must become not less but far more than it had been in the past. The weakness of the City-state as depicted by

Isaiah and Zephaniah had been that while it was composed of righteous individuals, yet *quâ* city it had little or nothing to distinguish it from other cities ; its ideal appealed only to those who had imagination enough and piety enough to grasp it. This must be remedied. The main occupation of the city as a city must be the public worship of the God of the Moral Law. In other words, the presence of God in the city—plain enough to an Isaiah—must be made equally plain to the average citizen. The proper sphere for the kodesh man was the kodesh State ; and the State could only be visibly kodesh to the meanest capacity by elevating the public cultus to a degree of importance undreamed of before the Exile.

The wheel has come full circle. Hosea in the old “nationalistic” days assailed cultus as the foe of morality ; individualism has reached its fullest expression, and now, through Ezekiel, demands a vastly augmented cultus as the only public sphere in which private morality can exist.

In one point only did Ezekiel’s prescience fail him—he did not recognise that the chief of the State must be an ecclesiastical person. He did not foresee the High Priest.

The first anticipation of the High Priest occurs in the *Law of Holiness*, a small collection of statutes dating probably from the time of Ezekiel.

Here we have the priest who is chief among his brethren, and he is bound by stricter laws than the other priests as to his marriage and his mourning for the dead.

The author of the Law of Holiness has one extraordinary statute in his collection. He re-enacts the sacrifice of every slain beast which had been abolished in Deuteronomy. He has, of course, no thought of restoring the country shrines; his mental picture of the returned community is a small band settled in closest proximity to the Temple, so that it will be no inconvenience to make it the common slaughter-house, so to speak.

If Ezekiel is the prophet of the outward aspect of the restored Jerusalem, the Holiness-writer is the prophet of its interior aspect. He is the founder of the legalism of private life. He takes the word *kodesh* and seeks to make it apply to the whole of life. All a man's actions are to be regulated by the thought that he is consecrated to Yahweh. "*Be ye kodesh, for I am kodesh.*" Incest, witchcraft, niggardliness, failure to observe festivals—all the sins and errors which a man can commit are alike violations of the *kodesh* which binds him to Yahweh. This is the foundation of "legality." It is easy to sneer at it, to contrast it with the splendid freedom of the old prophets and so forth. That the system had its dangers we all know; the spiritual state of some of its followers was con-

demned centuries later by supreme authority. But to contrast it with the prophets and represent it as a decadence is somewhat futile. It was an endeavour to put into practice what the prophets had inculcated. The author had a clearer appreciation of the difficulties of human nature than Amos and Hosea. They had regarded "morality" as a thing in itself. Our writer, coming two centuries later, realises the necessity for a principle which shall govern the whole of life. He finds this in the theory of "consecration." It led in its abuse to the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of the Law, but none the less it was a great advance in the history of ethics and civilisation; it supplied one more upward step on the ladder from whose top society is still so far.

Preceding Josiah's legislation in the book of Deuteronomy there is a lengthy exhortation which is often taken as a preface to the legislation in question. When closely examined, however, it is seen to be an independent work—a sermon, of which the text is formally the Ten Commandments, but which actually confines itself to the first two. The statutes and the judgments and the commandments to which the sermon refers are *itself* and the Ten Words which preface it.

The sermon is placed in the mouth of Moses just before the Conquest of Canaan. It is of course

impossible in such a setting, but the passionate longing for the land of Canaan, and the oft repeated hope that when it is obtained it may never be lost, are not mere rhetorical figures, for the author must have been an exile in Babylon.

The constantly recurring phrase, "the good land," and the description of the country as watered by rain, not by canals, can hardly have come from the pen of a resident. "*And thou shalt remember all the way which Yahweh thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.*" The heart of the exile is speaking in these words.

The sum of the whole exhortation is "Love Yahweh!" This phrase is *perhaps* not absolutely new in Israel's thought, but it is new as being the formula which sums up the whole of religion.

The author is a keen individualist. He has no shrine, no sacrifice, no government. The Ark simply contains the Ten Commandments, and the Levites (who are not styled priests) are its guardians. But the writer raises personal religion to the height of a passion. He stirred humanity by a phrase which expressed what Hosea had felt and Jeremiah had taught, but which had never found adequate expression before. He takes the word which expresses the keenest longing of the human heart for the

finite, and by uniting it with the Infinite sums up theology and ethics in two words—"Love God."

"Yahweh is one Yahweh." The uniqueness of God is the root of the author's thought. Because he is one, because he is the ONE, therefore love him "*with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*"

And keep his commandments. These are simply the broad statements of the moral law. Righteousness is the inevitable sequel of love to God, because righteousness is the only thing for which God asks.

It shall be well with thee. The author never gets beyond the thought that prosperity is the sign of God's favour. A long and happy life is bestowed on those who love God. To the exile it was inevitable that the confusion between material and spiritual wealth should be complete just because he was enduring contrition and punishment at the same moment.

Isaiah of Babylon is the name which we give to the great anonymous author of the latter part of the book, ascribed popularly as a whole to Isaiah of Jerusalem. Linguistic resemblances no doubt induced an uncritical age to add these later prophecies to the earlier, but the standpoint is that of a writer at the closing period of the Exile.

Since the days of Jonah ben Amittai, who was

the last prophet of prosperity, the greater prophets had been voices of doom. The men of God who predicted that the time of woe was at an end had been fiercely denounced as false prophets, and indeed they had so shown themselves in the result. Jeremiah, in his contest with Hananiah, even claims that there is *prima facie* evidence in favour of the accuracy of gloomy vaticinations: "*The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war and of evil and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that Yahweh hath truly sent him.*"

Not deterred by the traditions of the Order, Isaiah of Babylon feels that the time has come to prophesy of peace, and he breaks out into his splendid exordium:—

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received at the hand of Yahweh double for all her sins."

A new danger was threatening the spiritual life of Israel. Jeremiah had commanded the exiles to build houses and plant gardens, to marry and beget children, and to settle down peaceably in the new country. The people had done so; in the fifty years that had elapsed they had become, as

their successors do everywhere, a singularly prosperous community, and many of them saw no reason why they should give up the comforts of life to undertake a pilgrimage and start afresh in a remote country. Religion? But if Yahweh could be worshipped in Babylon as well as in Judah why might they not remain?

The prophet meets this indifference by exhausting language in praise of the restored Jerusalem:—

“Thou shalt be a crown of beauty in the hand of Yahweh
And a royal diadem in the hand of thy god.”

There will indeed be “new heavens and a new earth,” and the delights of the kodesh mountain set forth by Isaiah of Jerusalem are re-edited and enlarged.

The city will actually be built of precious stones:—

“I will set thy stones in antimony,
And lay thy foundations with sapphires.
And I will make thy turrets of rubies,
And thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy borders of pleasant stones.”

The prophet's polemic against idols is really directed against this acquiescence in life in the great settled State of Babylon. It was so powerful, so well established; surely the gods of Babylon were powerful gods. Therefore Isaiah of Babylon heaps satire alike on the images and on their makers, and prophesies the coming downfall of the

State when Bel and Nebo would be carried into captivity.

But even assuming that the nation was ready and anxious to return, how was the Return to be accomplished? When Israel came out of Egypt it was entirely a miraculous deliverance and journey. The Red Sea had rolled apart at the advance of their forefathers.

To meet this the prophet advances his great doctrine that, in Carlyle's words, the Age of Miracles is forever here :—

“ The hand of Yahweh is not shortened that it cannot help,
Nor is his ear heavy that it cannot hear.”

He calls upon Yahweh to reveal himself as fully now as ever in the remote past :—

“ Awake, awake ; put on strength, O arm of Yahweh ;
Awake as in the days of old, the generations of ancient
times.”

Nothing could be more erroneous than to suppose that because all these years Jerusalem was lying desolate therefore Yahweh was not caring for her :—

“ But Zion saith, Yahweh hath forsaken me,
And Adonai hath forgotten me.
Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That she should not have compassion on the son of her
womb ?
Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee,
Lo, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands ;
Thy walls are continually before me.”

Even as Yahweh led Israel up from Egypt so will he lead her from Babylon :—

“When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee,
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ;
When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be
burned,
Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

Let not Israel sit dreaming of a miraculous past ; the future will be far more wonderful :—

“Remember ye not the former things,
Neither consider the things of old.
Behold I will do a new thing ;
Now shall it spring forth ;
Shall ye not know it ?”

The most striking conception in the whole of the writings of Isaiah of Babylon is that of Israel as the *Servant of Yahweh*. The prophet looks back over the past history, and asks himself what is the meaning of it all. What was the divine purpose in taking the small and obscure race of Israel and training it century after century by afflictions and disasters? Obviously Yahweh cannot be indifferent to all the other races, so much more numerous and powerful, and yet, what is his purpose toward them? The writer finds the solution in the result of Israel's discipline. Israel has learnt the great lesson of Yahweh and righteousness, and now all nations are to learn it from him. Not exactly does the prophet conceive of Israel as a missionary ; it is rather the very spec-

tacle of him that is to convince the nations when they see and understand.

He pictures the kings of many nations standing round Israel gazing in astonishment when they realise that God has been carrying out the great drama of the world with this obscure people :—

“ He hath no form or comeliness,
And when we see him there is no beauty that we should
desire him.”

Yet all his sufferings have been not for himself alone but for all nations. The kings exclaim in wonder :—

“ Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows.”

“ All we like sheep have gone astray,
We have turned every one to his own way ;
And Yahweh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

But in the glorious consummation Israel will recognise what a splendid, what a tremendous place he has been assigned in the world's story :—

“ He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.”

CHAPTER XXIV

HISTORY REWRITTEN

THE problem which faced the younger generation of the exiles was to account for their being in Babylon. Their fathers told them that they had come from a Western land called Judah, and that they would return there some day. Why had they ever left it? The superficial answer was, of course, that the king of Babylon had deported them, but they were also taught to believe in Yahweh the great Ruler of the World, in whose hands the kings of the earth were mere instruments, and who had himself brought them to Babylon and would take them home.

The gods of the nations were simply blocks ; there was only one God, Yahweh, and he was the god of Israel. He was great, not because his people were great, but because the whole world was his. He had chosen Israel for no very obvious reason, except the better to display his own glory. Israel had sinned against him, especially by wor-

shipping the no-gods, and, therefore, he had exiled them from the good land. But when the punishment was complete he would take them home, and they would dwell there for ever.

These were the principles inculcated in the young minds in Babylon, and in the light of them the rising generation studied their past. The records were before them.

It is often asked whether a nation could so have idealised its past as Israel has done ; whether the very fact of the existence of the record is not a proof that the events happened somewhat as they are described ; but the circumstances must be considered. Egypt and Judah were only names to the younger members of the community. They were mere story-book lands, like India and China to the Europeans of a century ago. Anything might have happened there. And the most wondrous change had come over Yahweh. The god who in the earliest narrative had fought in every skirmish, who had called for help against the mighty, who had wandered in the desert, had loved to smell the roasting fat, who had been angry when his ritual was not *en règle*, had revealed himself at last as the Almighty Creator of the Universe, the God of Righteousness, the King of all Nations !

Hence the whole basis of history was upset ; the probable became improbable, and the most improbable elements in the old story the surest

evidence of truth. As the source of all things was working out its own wonderful purpose it would indeed have been curious if things had happened in the ordinary way. It was only in the fitness of things that all the first-born of Egypt should die in one night, that Israel should eat angels' food in the desert, that Jordan should roll back, that the walls of Jericho should fall at the blast of the priests' trumpets. The wondrous events in the old legends became the staple of the story. As the Law was the revelation of Yahweh's will, so the supposed lawgiver Moses became a figure of supreme importance. It is curious how little the prophets have to say of Moses. The desert life was the Golden Age for many of them, but they rarely mention the name which is now for all time bound up with Israel's wanderings. The reason, of course, is obvious ; it was the Law which made the lawgiver. The Moses of real tradition is, as we stated at the outset, a very shadowy character of whom we know little but the name.

The history from the Conquest to the Exile had obviously to be re-written. The prime offence was now "worshipping other gods." Every judge and king had to be tested by this rule. Every successful king was a Josiah ; every failure a Manasseh. It is a happy circumstance that for the most part this has been done by means of a so-called "framework," in which the narratives excerpted from the old

histories are set without much alteration. These frameworks were of the utmost value in the education of Israel, but as history they are almost entirely valueless. Thus the narratives in *Judges* are set in the constant cycle—idolatry, captivity, repentance, deliverance. The only historical basis for this has been already mentioned, viz., that, whatever rites and invocations were employed locally, the League went out to battle in the name of Yahweh, with primitive desert customs only.

After the disruption of the kingdom every Northern king is condemned for following the founder, Jeroboam ben Nebat. Ahab is specially condemned as a Baal worshipper. In the South six of the kings before Hezekiah have praise bestowed on them for doing well, though combined with the mild censure that the bamoth were not removed. The four kings after Josiah are all condemned, in spite of the favour which Jeremiah and Ezekiel showed to the young exiles Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin.

It is astonishing to modern readers to find the number of obvious contradictions which the compilers have created or left in the final result; but accuracy was not aimed at. Wherever a section of an ancient book was fairly satisfactory it was incorporated without serious change. The patchwork is at times extraordinary. In places the English Revisers have tried to come to the rescue by inserting brackets.

But the very existence of the patchwork is the basis of modern criticism. The entirely different views of men and things expressed in different styles form a sound criterion for distinguishing the elements out of which the present books have been composed.

This must be not only recognised, but acted upon before we can hope to restore the Old Testament to its proper place. The whole work must be dissected and printed in an intelligible order, with headings to guide the reader.

This would not perhaps be so revolutionary a proceeding as we might fancy. The order of books in the Greek and English Bibles is not that of the Hebrew. Why is Ruth placed after Judges and Chronicles after Kings? Because in those positions they seemed to follow a true historical order, which was not recognisable in the original. It is the same principle applied more radically which must guide the revision now necessary. Not only must Daniel and Jonah be removed from their positions among the prophets, but the whole history must be arranged according to its sources. Our English translators did not hesitate to put summaries as signposts at the head of the chapters. The same must be done in the Old Testament which is demanded at the present day, but the headings must indicate the approximate date and the standpoint of the writer.

When thinking men are properly instructed they are interested in the visits of Amos to Bethel and Micah to Jerusalem; they recognise the value of these early incidents in the history of religion. But as we offer them the Bible to-day they find between these two the story of Jonah and the whale, and they naturally ask whether the whole book is a collection of fairy tales. Our ancestors believed the whale story to be history; we know it to be a late romance. Why do we not print it as such with suggestions as to its meaning?

Again, the opening section of Genesis is a fine introduction to universal history. When the reader learns that the writer has adapted a previous eight works scheme to his six days, and that the heavenly bodies are regarded as living creatures, his difficulties are largely removed, and he appreciates the grandeur of the idea that here Elohim is preparing the stage, so to say, for the age-long drama. "*I am he that comes first and he that comes last.*" This is Elohim coming first; his coming last has yet to be declared.

But when we take this Proem to History, and run it without a break unto the fine old folk-tale of the Garden, we spoil both. It is no answer to say they have been united for two thousand years; the gifts of critical insight and natural science are those of to-day.

As the matter stands at present, the man of

education must make a special and lengthy study before he is in a position to use his Bible as a spiritual handbook. The Old Testament will never be *too* easy to read ; let us try not to make it too hard.

CHAPTER XXV

THE RETURN

THE Return from Babylon was not an act, but a process extending over centuries.

Probably about ten per cent of the people had been carried away altogether at the two captivities. But the importance of the exiles is not to be gauged by their numbers. They were in every way the flower of the nation—the nobles and the priests. Government, education, culture, enlightened religion had all gone to Babylon; the people left in the land were the lower orders who had never been accustomed to think or act for themselves. The walls and principal buildings of Jerusalem were in ruins. The City-state had come to an end. A Babylonian governor, no doubt, took the place of the murdered Gedaliah. Religion must inevitably have sunk back to a crude worship of local deities embroidered with fragments of star-cultus.

The Return from Babylon then has nothing to do with the movement of a whole population. It

means the return of the comparatively few interested in, and capable of, reorganising the *disjecta membra* of the political and religious body.

The four great voices discussed in a previous chapter show how widespread was the desire to take part in the great work of re-establishing Jerusalem and its Temple. Nothing but the strongest positive evidence would prove that (as some think) when the opportunity of returning actually occurred no one took advantage of it for a hundred years. And the available evidence is all the other way.

Yet we must remember the practical difficulties. Successful business men with wives and families would hardly care in large numbers to face the long journey and the new settlement. They would not, of course, definitely abandon the intention to return, but they would postpone their departure to a more convenient season.

Young unmarried nobles and priests would naturally be the classes which would make the venture.

The Capture of Babylon in 538 B.C. by Cyrus, whose dominions included Elam, Media, and Persia, afforded an opportunity for a beginning to be made in the great undertaking.

The first to return was Sheshbazzar, a prince of the royal house. He is called the Nasi of Judah, and it is stated that he was allowed by Cyrus to take back the vessels of the Temple. How many adventurers went with him we have no means of

knowing—probably a few only ; but a larger company soon followed under Zerubbabel, another royal prince, and Jeshua, one of the leading priests. The altar was set up in its old position, and sacrifices were resumed, though, of course, all the Temple buildings lay in ruins.

We are to think of the Return as going on gradually from decade to decade. Jerusalem became more and more attractive as she gradually recovered from her destruction. About twenty years after the first Return the prophets Haggai and Zechariah preached to the people inciting them to rebuild the Temple. It has been suggested that they sprang from the people of the land, but the standpoint of Zechariah is certainly that of a returned exile, and the practically simultaneous appearance of the two prophets suggests that they had come together from Babylon. Zechariah also mentions other exiles who had come about this time, and declares that more will follow them.

In 516 B.C. the Second Temple was completed, though naturally it was not on the same magnificent scale as the first.

For thirty years we have no further notice of the restored community, but apparently young men continued to come from Babylon from time to time. They were, as was said, unmarried, and, disdainful to wed the daughters of the people of the land, they took as wives the daughters of the nobles of the other tribes round about.

In the beginning of the reign of Xerxes (485 B.C.) the Jewish community was sufficiently active to induce its hostile neighbours to lay some accusation against Jerusalem. We do not know what the result was.

A further party of Jews came from Babylon early in the reign of Artaxerxes (465 - 425), and the people now conceived themselves to be strong enough to undertake the rebuilding of the city walls. Their enemies succeeded in delaying the work, but eventually it was carried out.

Now that the city was actually in existence once more, some fifteen hundred men, together with women and children, set out on the return from Babylon. The leader of this expedition was Ezra, priest and scribe.

On arrival at Jerusalem Ezra was horrified to find how many of the returned exiles had married foreign wives. He saw clearly that this was fatal to the position of Israel as a unique nation in possession of the only revelation from God. He appealed to public sentiment, and succeeded, for the moment, in carrying his point. All marriages with aliens were to be repudiated.

Here, again, we have a sudden break in the narrative, and twelve years later we learn that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and the gates burnt with fire. This was no doubt done by the

Persian satrap at the instigation of the Samaritans and other enemies of the Jews.

Nehemiah the Jew was cupbearer to the Persian King. He boldly made request to be allowed to go and rebuild the walls. Permission was granted, and in 444 B.C. the walls were dedicated after only fifty-two days of labour. Nehemiah remained as governor at Jerusalem for some years before his return to Persia. He abolished usury, and secured a return of mortgage bonds to those who were on the verge of bankruptcy. He then took a census of all the families of those who had returned from Babylon, and found that the total was 42,000.

In conjunction with Ezra, Nehemiah promulgated the *Law*, i.e. the legal portions of the Pentateuch, practically as we now have them.

He continued the crusade against mixed marriages, and insisted on the strictest observance of the Sabbath.

The necessity of the case compelled the majority of the people to live in the country districts. There is a strange pathos in the attempt to restore the City-state as it had been before the destruction. "*And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities. And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.*"

In 432 B.C. Nehemiah paid a second visit to Jerusalem to see that his reforms were still being carried out. He was disappointed at what he saw, but his vigorous measures restored discipline, and the community was established on a permanent basis.

Thus the great history comes to a pause. In the world-drama there are, of course, no beginnings and no endings, but there are points where the spectator may pause and take breath as it were. Such a point occurs at the establishment of Israel under the Persians.

The Greek Empire in politics, and Apocalypsis in thought, opened a new era, with which we need not now concern ourselves.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT

THE High Priest of the Second Temple is by far the most august personage in the ancient world. The hierurgic functions of the kings and priests of Babylon and Egypt are insignificant beside his. Even his successors in the Roman Papacy lack some elements of his grandeur.

Like most institutions, the high-priesthood was of slow growth. The principal priest of the old temple had held an office of considerable importance, but he was only one of the city officials, and even in his own shrine he was second to the king. His office was of the same class as the scribe, or the captain of the body-guard.

The writer of the Law of Holiness had first in Babylon dreamed of a priest who should form by himself an order in the priesthood. After the Return this idea embodied itself more and more fully as time went on. Even in the Priestly Code there

are different strata relating to the High Priest's functions.

There was no king in Israel after the Exile to withdraw attention from the chief minister of the shrine, but something far deeper than that was the cause of his unique development.

The prevailing note of the post-exilic thought was disillusionment. The tremendous world drama had been played out to the last act. Century after century Yahweh had been training his *Am Segullah*, his peculiar people, by prophets and by judgments. His holy city he had destroyed and rebuilt. Every idol cult had disappeared. Israel humbled, chastened, converted, loved Yahweh with heart and soul. All was ready for the great *dénouement*, when, as Isaiah had prophesied, the light of the moon would be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days—and nothing happened.

A commonplace little community, poor, not very happy, placed in a land which was after all quite second-rate as regards fertility; a people of no consequence at all in the great world, which was throbbing with the rivalry of Persia and Greece: that was the grand finale to Yahweh's drama.

Truly Yahweh was a god past finding out.

And yet there was another side. Just because they were poor, and despised, a people of no account, their position was all the more wonderful and mysterious. The Eternal and Almighty God, the

Unseen Power that works the continuous miracle of Creation, he in whose hand all men live and move, *had* chosen them out from the remotest past, leaving aside all the great and mighty nations, and had laboured from day to day building them up in his most holy love and fear, rising early, and sending prophet after prophet, bearing with their backslidings and their revolts, until he had taught them all his wonderful Law, and written it on their hearts.

It was a paradoxical position, full of awe.

Poor, despised, yet in one point only they were on such a pinnacle of dizzy greatness that they feared for themselves—the Eternal Creator had revealed himself to them alone. All the nations round were pouring out prayers and sacrifices to stocks and stones, mere dumb futilities, whose worship was a grotesque mockery, a wicked imbecility; Israel was holding up holy hands, and offering pure sacrifices to the only living God, the one eternal Source of all things.

Who is sufficient for these things? Between a finite god and finite man, a finite priest may mediate; but between finite man and an *infinite* God——?

Therefore the high-priesthood became a position of tremendous awe. Of all the world God has chosen Israel; of all Israel God has chosen the High Priest—he is the mediator between creature and

Creator ; he is the meeting point of the Seen and the Unseen. The High Priest does literally enter *within the Veil*, for on the one side he is actually in contact with God.

The great "Prayer of Solomon" at the Dedication of the Temple really represents the attitude of the High Priest towards his functions. He is under no illusions as to any residence of the deity in the shrine — such childlike beliefs have long since evaporated with the expanding idea of God. God is only "omnipresent" by a fiction of speech, for really he is outside phenomena altogether, "*heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.*" But, on the other hand, here is the actual fact, that in this shrine alone, in all the world are men worshipping the true God. He *has* said, "*My name, i.e. my revelation, shall be there.*" The Temple is the visible expression of revealed religion. Therefore he entreats that prayers and confessions when offered there, and those which in absence are in thought connected with it, may find acceptance with God.

The functions of the High Priest reached their culmination on the Great Day of Atonement. This is entirely a post-exilic institution. In times of distress fast days had indeed been ordered before the Fall of Jerusalem, but now a great fast day is appointed to be held annually, and it is far more than a mere fast day ; it is the day when "God's High

Priest" actually makes atonement for the sins of the people.

The ritual of the day grew gradually in complexity, and contained several curious customs, which were, however, all subordinated to the main thought.

The High Priest alone was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, wherein stood the Ark with some tablet on top of it. The ordinary ritual for entering the inner sanctuary was that the High Priest bathed and assumed special vestments and mitre; he then offered a bullock as a propitiation for himself and his house, and taking a censer filled it with coals from the altar, and entered the sanctuary in a cloud of incense, whose purpose was to act as a temporary veil.

All this was, of course, gone through on the Great Day of Atonement in addition to the special rites of the occasion. Two goats were chosen to bear the sins of the people; lots were cast, and one was chosen for Yahweh and one for Azazel—a very difficult phrase. The goat for Yahweh was killed, and the High Priest having censured the Holy of Holies took first the blood of the bullock and then the blood of the goat, and sprinkled them on and before the covering slab of the Ark. He then came out and made propitiation for the altar (and the altar of incense) by sprinkling and smearing them with the bloods. The goat for Azazel was brought

to him, and he offered it and laid his hands on its head, confessing the sins of Israel. A man who was in readiness then led the goat to "a solitary land." The High Priest laid aside his special vestments, bathed, and returned to the court, where he burnt the fat of the bullock and the goat on the altar. The skins, flesh, and offal were taken outside the city and burnt.

The Jewish High Priest was priest for the whole human race. Into the vexed question of the missionary spirit of Judaism we need not venture, but undoubtedly it was taken for granted that when any nation or individual turned to the true God they would present their prayers and offerings in the Temple at Jerusalem, and share in the Atonement made there annually.

CHAPTER XXVII

LITERATURE OF THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD

THE oft-repeated epigram that Israel went into captivity a nation and came back a church, contains rather less truth than we may reasonably expect in such oracular summaries. The great bulk of the people did not go to Babylon at all. Moreover, the antithesis between nation and church is a faulty one. Were the Papal States a nation or a church? Were the Puritan Settlements in America nations or churches?

No national function was wanting after the Return. Neither theology nor prayer took the place of buying and selling. Courts of justice sat as they had done before. Life was not transformed into religion. The meaning underlying the epigram quoted above is that, of all the functions of the chief magistrate, the regulation and execution of cultus, always important, had now become supreme; and that, in private life, daily actions were associated more fully than ever before with definite religious sanctions.

In the religion of the day, sacerdotalism and individualism were both at a maximum. Man received divine favour because he was an Israelite, and the ritual which centred in the High-priesthood was the channel of grace to the nation. But there was constant introspection to inquire whether the heart were right, whether the individual was an Israelite indeed.

The literature reflects the religion. The *disillusionment* alluded to before gives a gloomy tone to the whole. It would be an exaggeration to say that Israel regards itself as under a curse, but the terrible day of Yahweh, when the towers fell, lingers constantly in the memory with the wonder why nothing has happened to justify Israel's belief in its own unique position.

The *Psalms*, most of which are post-exilic, form the spiritual song-book of all generations, just because they run over the whole range of individual and corporate experience.

In regard to God we have the fervent appreciation of him for what he is in himself:—

“Great is Yahweh, and highly to be praised,
His greatness is unsearchable.”

And again:—

“If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.”

As the Ruler of the Universe the psalmists rejoice in God. The 104th Psalm is too long to quote, but

it is full of joy in the visible world. Or again, from another psalm :—

“ Praise Yahweh from the earth,
Ye monsters and all deeps,
Fire and hail, snow and vapour,
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word ;
Mountains and all hills,
Fruitful trees and all cedars,
Beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and flying fowl.”

The contemptuous attitude towards the gods of the nations takes the same form as in the writings of Isaiah of Babylon :—

“ The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
The work of men’s hands ;
They have mouths, but they speak not ;
Eyes have they, but they see not ;
They have ears, but they hear not ;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.”

There are two great revelations of God : one is the history of Israel ; the other is the Law. The 119th Psalm is an almost passionate expression of the delight of one who feels that the Infinite has actually laid down statutes to guide the wandering feet of men.

The Return from captivity is the starting point of a new life for Israel :—

“ When Yahweh turned again the captivity of Zion,
We were like unto them that dream ;
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with joy.”

It must be noted that the City is more prominent than the Temple in the Psalter, though the two are blended together. For it is not simply blessings of "church" life that the psalmists ask for. Beautiful sons and daughters, full storehouses, fruitful ewes, well-laden oxen, these as much as ever are the gifts of Yahweh. Man has indeed learned the meaning of higher blessings as well, but the old blessings are still the necessary basis of life.

Because Yahweh reigns therefore his people are safe :—

"We will not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the sea."

And yet the feeling remains that *something* is wrong still with the course of the world :—

"Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?
Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?"

And again :—

"Doth his promise fail for evermore?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious?"

Faith constantly wins the victory. God is reigning ; all *must* be well :—

"Yahweh is my shepherd ; I shall not want."

It is often impossible to distinguish accurately when the psalmist is describing his personal experience and when he is speaking as Israel personified.

But sometimes the personal element stands out clearly :—

“Yahweh, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty ;
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul ;
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.
O Israel, hope in Yahweh,
From this time forth and for evermore.”

The form in which dissatisfaction with existing conditions expresses itself in the Psalter is anger against men who do not serve God. These are, at times, the nations who are devoted to idolatry ; at other times, they are the “ungodly” in Israel itself. In either case it is they who are hindering the good purposes of God.

The *Book of Chronicles* gives us the last stage in the “rewriting of the history” of which we have already spoken. To the writer, the Second Temple and its ritual are the exact counterparts of those which existed before the Exile. It is true there were kings in those days, but they never ventured (without rebuke) to assume priestly functions. From the days of the separation of North and South, the Northern kingdom was apostate and heathen. Its story is no part of the true history of Israel.

How far the Chronicler employs trustworthy sources for the information which is not derived from

the Book of Kings has not yet been settled. All that can be said is, that any circumstance, the record of which occurs only in Chronicles, is suspect as far as historical accuracy is concerned.

The value of the Chronicler is not for the past, but for the ideas and customs of his own day. We see how the kings of old *would* have acted if they had been inspired by post-exilic motives, and we have, therefore, a clear picture of the returned community.

Of course, both to David and Solomon, the building of the Temple is the *magnum opus*. Solomon's Palace (of which the Temple was really an annexe) now becomes a token of his piety, for he could not allow a strange woman like the daughter of Pharaoh to dwell in a house which had been made *kodesh* by the presence of the Ark in David's time.

When Abijah of Judah goes to war with Jero-boam of Israel, he begins the campaign by an address on the heresy of the North and the orthodoxy of the South. Judah has the priests, and the shewbread, and the golden candlestick.

So it runs through the whole story. It is invaluable as showing the mental attitude of learned and pious worshippers in the Second Temple.

The books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are a continuation of Chronicles by the same author. In *Nehemiah* he incorporates parts of an autobiography, in which we see individual religion fully expressing

itself. Nehemiah constantly appeals to him whom he addresses as "My God" to help and remember him.

In the book of *Esther*, and in the original story of *Daniel*, we have the spirit of the nation seeking escape from the narrow and rather pitiful political circumstances. The empires have broken down the old fixed national barriers, and political careers are open to brilliant individuals of any origin. Esther and Daniel are each the power behind the throne. This thought has helped to sustain Israel throughout the centuries, and these old romances have been "fulfilled" times without number down to our own days.

The *Book of Job* discusses the question why good men often suffer adversity. The question is by no means "as old as humanity"; it was only asked after individualism had become a recognised mental attitude. The answer of the book is that, in the vast majority of cases, men who complain are only getting the punishment they deserve; but that, in the very rare case where God does afflict the righteous, man must ultimately leave the matter in the hands of him who has shown his wisdom in the visible universe.

The *Proverbs* reflect the "commonplace" wisdom

of life, which Israel only fully developed after the Exile. The poetical personification of Wisdom is the highest flight of this line of thought. Otherwise it represents an age whose ideals had faded. There is no philosophy of life. Even the "Love God" of the Deuteronomist and "Kodesh to Yahweh" of the Holiness-writer have somewhat lost their glory in the light of common day, and the compiler seeks to provide a system of sound common-sense rules which will carry man through life. They are, in part, utilitarian, but they are all designed to aid a morality which was somewhat cooled in its enthusiasm.

In that remarkable work, *Ecclesiastes* (Koheleth), we have disillusionment almost raised to the level of a philosophy.

The fundamental proposition is that the world-drama has no *plot*; it consists of the same old scenes enacted over and over again. The prologue sets this out with regard to the natural world. The sun rises only to set; the wind shifts only to come back to the same point again; the rivers flow down, only to return to their sources. There is no development, only a constant cycle of changes. In another fine passage he develops the same thought with regard to men, "*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up.*" He describes many "times" for contrary

actions. The thought is that nothing is accomplished ; every action already presupposes the action which will neutralise it, and so reduce things to the exact state they were in before. The writer pictures himself as autocrat, wisely employing power, wealth, and pleasure, so as to enjoy their maximum satisfaction ; but when all is complete, it is only a "striving after wind." Nothing is really accomplished. When death comes the man knows his memory will fade, and he has no sort of guarantee what his successors will do with his works.

It is not only a pointless world ; it is a cruel world. The writer's soul is wrung with the thought of "*all the oppressions that are done under the sun.*" And there is no remedy ; it is part of the scheme that things should be so.

The first faint light of Apocalypsis was apparently beginning to glimmer when Koheleth was written. Men were beginning to say that the next life would make amends for this. "How do you know," asks the writer, "that there is a next life at all?"

What, then, is "Wisdom"? It is to recognise that the world is as God chooses to make it, that nothing we can do can alter it, and that it is a hopeless riddle. For the individual, all effort and striving are folly ; the pursuit of wealth, the pursuit of love, the pursuit of mirth are all destined to end in failure :—

“ He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver.”

“ One man among a thousand have I found ; but a woman among all those have I not found.”

“ As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.”

It is better to be dead than to be alive, and better than either is not to have been born. Yet Wisdom does not by any means point to suicide. The wise man lives in the fear of God. He is to enjoy the passing day as it goes. Food and drink, refreshing sleep, the enjoyment of marriage, these are the only possible good things. Nothing is ours but the passing moment, and no pleasure is possible save the simple enjoyment of rudimentary sensations. All striving is the pitch of folly, for God has so built the world that the race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong. “ *The end of the matter ; all has been heard ; fear God and keep his commandments ; this is a complete statement for humanity.*”

It is a strange picture ; the highest wisdom is to know that we can know nothing ; the only object in life is to leave all “objects” severely alone, get what enjoyment the passing moment affords, and take heed not to violate the Law of God. Truly “Jerusalem” has perished in the writer’s soul ; the extraordinary thing is that religion is so vital that it still survives.

Dissatisfaction with the political and religious situation forced Israel to look forward to displays

of Yahweh's judgment still in the future. This is most clearly set forth in the last of the prophets, who goes by the pseudonym *Malachi*, "my messenger." To him the great Day of Yahweh, when Jerusalem fell, is only a foretaste of a still greater and more terrible day, when the "Messenger of Yahweh" will appear in the Temple. To the good it will be a period of joy and gladness; to the evil it will be a burning furnace. Elijah will be sent before the day comes in order to preach righteousness, "*lest I come and smite the land with a curse.*"

CHAPTER XXVIII

CONCLUSION

WE are now in a position to sum up the main principles which ought to guide us in our study of the Old Testament.

The political development stands out in clear letters. When Israel comes before our notice it is as a loose aggregation of pastoral tribes governed by hereditary chiefs. The nation exists as yet only as a League in times of war. The expansion of neighbouring states forces on a consolidation and centralisation. The Head of the League becomes permanent. In half a century he develops into the absolute monarch of the whole people. But this is a mere stage. The tribes break asunder under separate kings. The cities begin to grow and the country nobles drift to them. Gradually the monarchy grows weaker and the aristocracy more powerful. Jerusalem becomes a constitutional State with the law above the king. Before the aristocracy succeed in expelling the monarch the city is destroyed. This

alters the course of the development, but when the exiled ruling class return from Babylon there is no restoration of the monarchy.

With regard to the historic value of our sources we may divide the history into four periods. From the Exodus to the Foundation of the Monarchy we have mere fragments: names and events (perfectly genuine in many cases) which we have no means of fitting into a consecutive whole. From Saul to Ahab we have a fairly complete sequence both of men and things, but, owing to the lateness of most of our material, we are unable with certainty to discuss character or motives. From Ahab to Zedekiah we have history in a fuller sense. After the Exile the history is curiously fragmentary, but we have a large body of literature which gives us the clue to the thought of an otherwise obscure time.

In the matter of civilisation we pass steadily from a time of tents and war-ballads to an age of cities and general literary culture.

In the sphere of morals we begin with the old tribal ethics, where sin is conceived simply as a wrong done to a fellow-clansman; we end with religious individualism—sin is a violation of the law, which the self-revealing Creator has written on the heart of man. The whole fantastic conception of moral decline must be thrown to the moles and the bats. Israel, we are told, in the desert showed a sad falling away from the spiritual religion of the

Patriarchs ; the period of the Judges reveals utter forgetfulness of the ethics of Mosaism ; the foundation of the Monarchy indicates spiritual failure to appreciate the sublime theocracy of the Judges ; the division of the kingdom is a result of moral blindness to Israel's unity and religious mission. After this, of course, the supposed degradation shows rapid acceleration, and Samaria and Jerusalem perish in a state of appalling moral corruption. At last we think we have touched bottom ; but no—the returned exiles built on a legalism unspeakably lower than the free prophetic religion of their fathers under the Kings !

This amazing reading of history is, of course, only possible when taken in connection with its equally extraordinary complement, viz. that the great men of each generation were entirely out of connection with the rest of the people. We have, in fact, some two or three dozen men of towering intellectual and moral excellence in the history of a nation which otherwise was terribly depraved, and whose whole history is a going from bad to worse.

It is this strange perversion of history which makes the story of Israel so unreal. We have said, indeed, that it is a favourite view of most English historians, whatever nation they may be describing ; but in the case of Israel it becomes, not a moral tag inserted here and there, but the keynote and explanation of the whole.

It is rather futile to try and compare men at different stages of a great development. Was Giotto, Da Vinci, or Raphael the greatest painter? Each generation of Israel shows a falling short of its own standard; but the standard was constantly rising, and the final ethics of Israel have practically become the ethics of the world. And we must constantly remember that ethical problems always arise naturally out of ethical practice. The idea of a primitive State in which great men preach sublime morals to a herd of moral swine is frankly impossible. The herd and their morals form the platform on which the leader stands to reach to something higher. The nobles of Jehoiakim's reign were not what they might have been; but they formed the stage for Jeremiah. Can we conceive of a Jeremiah in the days of Gideon and Jephthah? It is the centuries of *practice* that have made Israel the instructors of the whole world.

The Religion of Israel is one of the bases on which the Modern World rests. The days are gone for ever in which we can seek to do it honour or to make it effective by setting it in a class by itself, remote from the great drama of God's dealings with the world. We are only courting failure by inviting thinking men to consider a phenomenon which claims to be outside of the course of history. On the contrary, the more we can show its true place

and its analogies, the more valuable service will be done. Hence not only must we get rid of ancient views of its absolutely unique character, but we must carefully avoid the idea of a "self-evolution of dogma." Nor is it enough to say that the prophets took the national religion and set it free from the local conditions under the pressure of Assyrian invasion. We must follow step by step the religious development as one aspect of the life of a community. Here lies the importance of seeing Israel's religion as the theological counterpart of the growth of the City-state of Jerusalem. It is this which makes it actual at every stage, and it is this that translates it from the "dreams" of prophets to the vitality of practical politics, in the literal meaning of the phrase. The City-states of the Mediterranean have long since disappeared. They lived for themselves, without much thought of the enduring work they were doing for posterity. But doing the things they did for the first time, and under wonderfully simple conditions, they succeeded in establishing certain first principles, which have lasted to our own day, and which must always be fruitful whatever conceivable developments may lie before the human race.

Israel's contribution is ethical religion, and the record of it is contained in Holy Scripture. Hence the Scriptures are the great source from which every age must draw its religion as from a perennial source.

No very striking success has as yet attended the efforts made to construct a Theology for the present day—a Theology which shall whole-heartedly accept and incorporate all the vast gains of last century in Natural Science, History, the Comparative Study of Religions, and other departments of human thought. The reason for this partial failure is to be sought in the unwillingness of reconstructive theologians to employ anything save the New Testament, or even selected portions of that. Men talk about going back to the First Century as if that “first” were really a beginning.

Nothing could be more erroneous. Every page of the New Testament carries us back to the Old. It is no paradox to say that in one sense the New Testament is simply a footnote to the Old, telling us that everything there written is to be understood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true Lawgiver, and the Message of all the prophets; He is the suffering Servant Israel, and He is Israel’s Messianic King; He is the Temple, the Sacrificial Victim, the High Priest. In a word, the New Testament is the Book of *God made man*; and that God is the God already revealed in the whole political and social nexus of the time. Jesus Christ is *personally* every institution and relationship which binds man to man—the two revelations of God are identical.

There was a marvellous congruity between this doctrine and the condition of humanity under the

Roman Empire. Jerusalem became the Holy City for the whole world. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was a revolt against Rome; the movement of thought at the present day is in some sense a revolt against Jerusalem.

The problem before the constructive theologian is therefore to discover God in the whole complex of relationship which binds man to man in the Twentieth Century. But he cannot hope to succeed unless he takes as his handbook the Hebrew Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation.

NOTES

AND REFERENCES TO ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

CHAPTER II

THE following passages in the *Lamentations* may be consulted:—The City, 2⁷⁻⁹, 4^{8, 12}, 5¹⁸; the Sanctuary, 1^{4, 10}, 2⁷, 4¹; the Population, 1¹; the King, 2^{6, 9}, 4²⁰; the Nobles, 1⁶, 2^{2, 9}, 5¹²; the Elders, 1¹⁹, 2¹⁰, 5¹⁴; the Priests, 1^{4, 10}, 2^{6, 9, 20}; the Torah, 2⁹; the Prophets, 2^{9, 14, 20}; the other Classes, 1^{4, 15, 18}, 2^{10-12; 21}, 3⁵¹; Rejoicing, etc., 1⁴, 2⁷, 5^{14, 15}; Beauty, etc., 2^{1, 15}; Siege, 1¹⁹, 2^{11, 12, 19}, 4^{4, 10}; Capture, 1³, 4¹¹, 5^{11, 12}; destroyed by Yahweh, 2^{8, 17}; Sins, 1⁸, 4¹³.

CHAPTER IV

Page 24.—*Moses commanded us a law.* Some critics strike out the name of Moses from the oldest form of this poem. That does not affect the statement of the text, though some explain the “King” as being Yahweh.

Page 28.—*Egyptian religion in Syria.* In one of the Tell el Amarna letters it is stated that the “gods of Egypt dwell in Dunip”; but this appears to be merely an expression of loyalty. (*Petrie, Syria and Egypt, p. 88.*)

Page 29.—*Village ruled over by its Melek.* Three of the Tell el Amarna communities appear to have no melek. But

the Melek (Ribaddi) was absent from Gubla when the letter was written, and the same may be true of the others. (*Ibid.* p. 138.)

Page 32.—*Song of Deborah*. Judg. 5. A later prose narrative of the same event is found in Judg. 4.

Page 33.—*Dictator*. Called Kazin or Rosh, Judg. 11¹¹.

CHAPTER V

Page 46.—*Civil and sacerdotal position*. The following quotations from the Dean of Maritzburg's Lectures clearly express the origin and status of primitive priesthoods:—

“According to that [patriarchal] order, the priestly office was neither hereditary nor traditory, but was the prerogative of every head of a house. Every one who succeeded in establishing a house became at once its priest, and stood in that capacity between God and his household. . . . In the patriarchal priesthood, however, there was no high priest possessed of special authority and power; on the other hand, whilst the several priests would be co-equal, so far as their office was concerned, their dignity would vary with that of their house. When the several families in a nation or clan assembled together, the head of the nation would be acknowledged as the priest highest in dignity, would be for the time the priest of the whole nation, and might be described as the chief priest.” (*Six Lectures on the Book of Genesis*, p. 85 f.)

That this is *theoretically* correct can hardly be questioned, but it seems to want some qualification in practice. Two causes, viz. (1) the necessity for technical ritual knowledge, and (2) the fear which primitive man had of approaching the altar, would tend to produce a reluctance in many *novi homines*, to exercise sacerdotal functions, and thus help to create the “professional” priesthoods of the ancient world.

CHAPTER VI

Page 53.—*Yahweh in the fight.* Cf. *inter alia*, Josh. 10^{10, 11}. *Prisoners sacrificed to Yahweh.* Cf. 1 Sam. 15³³, 1 Kings 20⁴². *Yahweh's share of the blood.* Cf. 1 Sam. 14³²⁻³⁴.

Page 54.—*Visible presence of God.* Cf. 1 Sam. 7¹².

Page 54.—*The Ark of Yahweh.* For the oldest accounts of this "idol," see Numb. 10³³⁻³⁶, 1 Sam. 4^{3ff.} But in both passages the word "Covenant" must be a later interpolation. The oldest name is undoubtedly the Ark of Yahweh (1 Sam. 4⁶) or the Ark of Elohim (1 Sam. 3³). The Ark fell into disrepute after it was captured, but David treated it with great honour, and it enjoyed the highest veneration under the kings. Jeremiah censured the worship of it (Jer. 3¹⁶), but after its destruction it once more rose in the estimation of the people, owing to the exilic theory that it had contained the Ten Commandments (Deut. 10^{1ff.}). There was a reproduction of it in the Second Temple.

Page 56.—*El Berith*, Judg. 9⁴⁶.

Page 62.—*The Levites.* The contradictions in the story of Levi are quite insoluble at present. The name is apparently applied to two totally different bodies, viz. an old tribe of the ordinary sort, which at an early date almost vanished from history; and in later times the priests of the various Yahweh temples. No satisfactory solution has been offered of the identity of the name of these two.

CHAPTER VII

Page 64.—*Dislike of Benjamin.* The Genesis traditions are favourable to Benjamin, while those in Judges are generally hostile.

Page 65.—*The oldest account of the foundation of the Monarchy.* 1 Sam. 9, 10¹⁻¹⁶, 11^{1-11, 15}. 10⁸ is obviously out of place, and belongs to chap. 13. *One long summer's day*, 1 Sam. 14¹⁻⁴⁶.

CHAPTER VIII

Page 77.—*Dôd the god of the South.* The allusions are scanty. The names Eldad, Dodijah (or Dodavahu), Dodo, Medad, Bildad, Ashdod (and of course David itself), occur in the Old Testament. There is also the almost certain emendation of "thy Dôd" for "way" in Amos 8¹⁴, and a possible allusion on the Moabite Stone. (See Gray, *Hebrew Proper Names*, p. 60.)

Page 78.—*Genealogical Table.* Sarah is probably only a feminine form of Israel, who therefore figures both as wife and grandson of Abraham.

Page 79.—*Zedek.* Cf. the names Melchizedek and Adonizedek. Isaiah calls Jerusalem the "City of Zedek," and Jeremiah speaks of "Yahweh our Zedek." The post-exilic priests are "Sons of Zadok."

Page 80.—*King David an ideal figure-head.* The story and character of David have been so altered by later writers that it is almost impossible to form any certain judgment on them.

Page 81.—*The harems of the judges.* Judg. 8³⁰, 12^{9, 14}.

Page 84.—*The people still lived in huts.* This is perhaps going somewhat beyond the actual evidence, and is simply the general conclusion derived from the fact that apparently Solomon taxed the people heavily and spent all the money on the Palace. Fine houses seem to have been still somewhat of a novelty in the days of Amos.

CHAPTER IX

Page 90.—For the Order of the Prophets and their customs and opinions the following passages may be compared *inter alia*. Perhaps the earliest allusion is 1 Sam. 10⁵. For the normal work of the Order, 1 Kings 20. Wild enthusiasm, 1 Sam. 19²⁰⁻²⁴. For their custom of going naked, see also Micah 1⁸ and Isa. 20². Their ordinary dress a skin mantle, 2 Kings 2¹³, Zech. 13⁴; of divine origin, Gen. 3²¹. They were kodesh, Jer. 1⁴; recognisable at sight, 1 Kings 20⁴¹. Trance produced by music, 2 Kings 3¹⁵. Pastoral life preferred to agricultural, Gen. 4²⁻⁵. Vineyards disliked, Gen. 9^{20, 21}. Cf. also Amos 2¹² *et al.* Objection to buildings, 2 Sam. 7⁵⁻⁷ *et al.* Luxury condemned, Isa. 2^{6^{ff.}}, 3^{16^{ff.}}; Amos 6^{3^{ff.}}.

CHAPTER X

Page 103.—*Nobles*. It is doubtful whether the nobles had the title melakim like the Homeric basileis. In some passages of 2 Kings and Jeremiah the phrase “kings of Judah” occurs in connections where it seems a little harsh to understand a succession. If we have to choose between explaining these kings as nobles or as members of the royal family, the former alternative is far more likely.

Page 103.—*Berith*. For the ritual of the berith, see Gen. 15^{10, 17, 18}; Jer. 34¹⁸.

Page 111.—*Micaiah ben Imlah*. 1 Kings 22.

CHAPTER XI

Page 120.—*Sargon's Inscription*. Found at Khorsabad. (See *Authority and Archaeology*, p. 101.)

CHAPTER XII

Page 125.—*Amos*. The whole book from 1³⁻⁹ 8^a may be accepted as in the main the work of the prophet, though there are interpolations, notably 5^{26, 27}. The earlier historical portion begins at 7¹.

Page 133.—*Hosea*. The whole book proceeds apparently from one source. The quotation given on p. 133 occurs in the plural in the text, but no doubt was originally in the singular with a personal application.

Page 133.—*Ruhamah*. There is some difficulty about this name. One would expect Rehumah. If Ruhamah is a Pual participle (like Meshullemeth) it ought to be Meruhāmah. The long vowel may be due to pause, and the *mem* lost as in *Lo-nuhamah* (Isa. 54¹¹), though this latter seems to be copied from Hosea. In any case the original name cannot have been *Lo-Ruhamah*, for without *Lo-Ammi* this would be unintelligible, and, moreover, we cannot suppose that Amos discovered Gomer's adultery until after Ruhamah's birth. We must therefore connect Ruhamah closely with Jezreel, and, bearing in mind the sexes of the children, it seems likely that Amos intended the name to suggest the secondary meaning "formed in the womb," from *rehem*.

CHAPTER XIII

Page 139.—*The Prophetical History*. 1 Kings 20, 21^{1-24, 27-29}, 22¹⁻³⁷; 2 Kings 3⁴⁻²⁷, 6²⁴⁻³³, 7, 8^{7-15, 29}, 9, 10^{1-14, 17}, 13¹⁴⁻¹⁹.

Page 139.—*The Miracles of Elisha*. 2 Kings 2, 4, 5, 6¹⁻²³, 8¹⁻⁶, 13^{20, 21}.

Page 144.—*The Blessing of the Tribes*. Deut. 33.

Page 145.—*Song of Songs*. Linguistic reasons have been offered for assigning an extremely late date to these poems. But this is a case in which the argument from “diction” is at its weakest. In songs which no doubt were sung from generation to generation, the presence of one or two Greek words is very poor evidence that the original author lived in the Greek period. The case is not at all analogous to that of Daniel.

CHAPTER XIV

Page 157.—*Micah*. The first three chapters of the existing book may be accepted as the work of Micah. The criticism of the remainder of the prophecy is still somewhat uncertain. See also p. 194.

CHAPTER XV

Page 167.—*Human sacrifice to Yahweh-Melek*. There is undoubtedly a difficulty here. Human sacrifice was a part of primitive Yahwism, while the invocation Melek can hardly have been used in the desert. Perhaps it was the burning (or burning alive) that was the differentia of the Canaanite Melek-worship. It would be interesting to know what Samuel did with the pieces of Agag.

CHAPTER XVI

Page 172.—*Isaiah of Jerusalem*. The book “Isaiah” is the collected work of many prophets. Without going into detail, the following chapters may be accepted broadly as proceeding from Isaiah of Jerusalem:—1-12, 14²⁸-23, 28-33.

Page 173.—*Seraphim*. The reason for thinking that the seraphim may have had the form of a dragon is that the same word is used for the fiery flying serpents, Numb. 21⁶.

Page 173.—*A respectable vocation*. See Isa. 23¹⁵⁻¹⁸.

Page 175.—*Yahweh not an idol-god*. See also Isa. 10^{10, 11}.

CHAPTER XVII

Page 191.—*Hammurabi's Code*. See translation by Johns, T. and T. Clark.

Page 195.—*Elijah the Tishbite*. 1 Kings 17-19. The anecdotes in C. 17 appeared to be borrowed from the stories of Elisha. The phrase "Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah," is of no weight as suggesting a northern source.

The additions to "Elijah" are Jehu's massacre of Baal-worshippers, 2 Kings 10^{15, 16, 18-28}; and the Baalzebub story, 2 Kings 1^{2-17^a}.

Page 197.—*Abraham's Intercession*. Gen. 18¹⁷⁻³³.

Page 197.—*The Sacrifice of Isaac*. Gen. 22¹⁻¹⁹.

CHAPTER XIX

Page 207.—*Synocismus*. For the corresponding movement in Attica, see Thucydides ii. 15. "Under Cecrops and the first kings, down to the reign of Theseus, Attica was always inhabited in separate cities, and had both prytaneia and magistrates; and at such times as they were not in fear of any danger, they did not meet the king to consult with him, but themselves severally conducted their own government, and took their own counsel; and there were instances in which some of them even waged war, as the people of Eleusis with Eumolpus did against Erechtheus. But when Theseus had come to the throne, who along with wisdom had power also, he both regulated the country in other respects, and, having abolished the council-houses and magistracies of the other cities, he brought them all into union with the present city, assigning them one council-house and one prytaneion; and compelled them all, while they enjoyed each their own pro-

perty as before, to use this one city only; which, since all were counted as belonging to it, became great, and was so bequeathed by Theseus to those who came after him. And from that time even to this the Athenians keep, at the public expense, a festival to the goddess, called the *Synoecia*."

The whole context will repay study.

Thucydides represents the change as a clever stroke of "Theseus" in the interests of the Monarchy; but this is evidently his own judgment only, and is almost certainly wrong. The bringing of all citizens together can only mean one thing—the introduction of some form of *popular* government, whether aristocratic or democratic. *Divide et impera* would have been the obvious monarchic policy.

In order that the reader may see the close connection between the bamoth of Judah and the prytaneia of Attica the following note (Arnold *in loco*) may be added:—

"The *πρυτανεῖον* is rightly mentioned as a mark of a distinct state; for it was the representation of the common home of all the inhabitants of the town, and stood to them collectively in the same sacred relation that each man's particular home did to him individually. It was well called *ἑστία πόλεως*, "penetrals urbis," and here, therefore, the perpetual fire was burning on the altar of the household gods of the city, as in private houses the domestic altar had its fire burning in the inner court; and here, as at the home of the city, the city collectively exercised the duties of hospitality."

Page 207.—*Priests and prophets*. No doubt many of the nobles were priests and some were prophets, but their political power was owing to their position as nobles.

Page 207.—*Josiah's Legislation*. Deut. 12¹⁻²⁵¹⁶. But this contains interpolations.

Page 213.—*Foreign Princesses*. The five gebirahs of the period were Hephzi-bah, Meshullemeth, Jedidah, Hamutal,

and Zebudah. The last three were all Judahites. Where Hephzi-bah came from is not stated. On the whole it is most likely that she was a foreigner, since Hephzi-bah, *i.e.* "My delight is in her," can hardly have been a real name. The probability is that she was brought to Jerusalem by one of the innumerable embassies of the time, and that Hezekiah (after the manner of Isaiah) gave her the sentence-name. Meshullemeth (Manasseh's wife) was the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. Neither of these names is conclusive, but the probability is slightly in favour of a foreign origin. Jotbah is not known as a Judahite town, and there was a Jotbathah in the desert. Haruz is not known to have been a Judahite name. Meshullemeth may therefore have been an Arabian.

Page 221.—*Freedom of Hebrew slaves.* Like all great social changes this proved to be impracticable to carry out all at once, and soon many ex-slaves were in their old positions, Jer. 34⁸⁻²².

CHAPTER XX

Page 229.—*The Nobles.* Our knowledge of the nobles during the constitutional period is derived mainly from the Book of Jeremiah with additional hints from Kings and Ezekiel.

CHAPTER XXI

Page 239.—*Jeremiah's Sermon.* Jer. 7¹⁻⁹²⁴.

CHAPTER XXIII

Page 265.—*The Law of Holiness.* Lev. 17-26.

Page 267.—*The Deuteronomic Sermon.* Deut. 5¹⁻¹¹²⁸. The relation of the Sermon to the Legislation is somewhat difficult, but undoubtedly the legislation is in the main Josiah's, and the sermon is exilic. There are distinct phrases. Thus

“the good land” does not occur in the legislation, and “the priests the Levites” does not occur in the sermon. Yet there are certain characteristics common to both. The best explanation of all these phenomena is that the compiler of Deuteronomy placed the sermon as a preface to the legislation, and to some extent rewrote the latter, inserting phrases borrowed from the sermon.

Page 269.—*Isaiah of Babylon*. Chapters 40-62 of the book *Isaiah* may be taken as proceeding from this prophet.

CHAPTER XXIV

Page 277.—*Frameworks*. Judg. 3^{12, 15, 30}, 1 Kings 16^{23, 25, 28}.

CHAPTER XXV

Page 282.—*The Return*. Sheshbazzar may be the same as Zerubbabel, but there is no proof of this. The successive stages of the Return and its history are based on the following passages:—(1) Ezra 1. (2) Ezra 3¹⁻⁷. (3) Ezra 5, 6. Cf. Zech. 1¹⁶, 2¹⁻⁷, 6^{10, d}. (4) Ezra 4⁶ (Xerxes) and 4^{7, ff}. (Artaxerxes). Note especially 4¹². (5) Ezra 7, 8. (6) Neh. 1, 2. (7) Neh. 13^{6, ff}.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Page 310.—*Our Lord*. The reader will note that on page 310 I have spelt the pronouns referring to our Lord with capital letters. I have done this advisedly, to show my adherence to the usual custom in ordinary circumstances. But in tracing the evolution of religion the use of capitals presents difficulties. If, in speaking of the tenth century B.C., we write “the God of Israel” and “the god of Moab,” using “He” of the former and “he” of the latter, we inevitably suggest that at that date the religion of Israel was “true”

and the religion of Moab “false,” which is just one of those generalisations that study is designed to correct. If, on the other hand, we arbitrarily choose a date after which we speak of Yahweh as “He,” we suggest that the prophets introduced a new religion—another misapprehension. Wherever therefore “God” stands alone I have so written it, but have omitted the capital in phrases, as “their god” or the “god of Israel,” and I have uniformly spelt the pronouns with small letters.

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 117. Nahum 3^{1, 7}.
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 129. Amos 2^{11, 12}.
 130. Amos 5², 6⁸.
 131. Amos 6¹², 5²⁵.
 132. Amos 3².
 133. Hosea 9¹⁴ (see note *in loc*).
 134. Hosea 1².
 135. Hosea 1⁴.
 136. Hosea 2²; Canticles 8⁷; Hosea 11^{8, 9}.
 137. Hosea 2¹⁹⁻²³.
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 146. Canticles 6⁸, 8⁷.
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 157. Micah 1⁶.
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 159. Micah 1⁵ (emended text).
 160. Micah 3¹².
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 181. Isaiah 30¹⁹, 4^{5, 6}.
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185. Isaiah 11⁹, 11⁷.
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Note.—The Chronology of Israelite History is largely conjectural, especially in the earlier portions; but the dates given in the column of events may be accepted as approximately correct.

	Contemporary Kings of Syria, Egypt, ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, &c.	Kings of ...	Kings of ...	Prophets.	Great Men.	Events.	
700 ←	ESARHADDON.	Manasseh. Amon. Josiah.	...	Zephaniah; Huldah. Nahum. Jeremiah; Habakkuk.	Hilkiah; Shaphan.	The Revolution, 621.	↑ 700
	<i>Necho.</i>	Jehoahaz. Jehoiakim.	...	...	Gemariah; Elnathan.	Fall of Nineveh, 606.	
600 ←	NEBUCHADREZZAR.	Jehoiachin. Zedekiah.	...	Ezekiel. Isaiah of Babylon. ...	Daniel.	First Captivity, 597. Fall of Jerusalem, 586.	↑ 600
	<i>CYRUS.</i>	...	...	...	Sheshbazzar; Zerubbabel.	Fall of Babylon, 538.	
	<i>CAMBYSES.</i>	...	...	Haggai; Zechariah.	Jeshua.	Temple rebuilt, 516.	↑ 500
500 ←	<i>DARIUS HYSTASPIS.</i>	Obadiah. Joel. Malachi.	Ezra. Nehemiah.	The Walls rebuilt, 444.	
	<i>XERXES.</i>	
	<i>ARTAXERXES.</i>	

* The first king of a new house.

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